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Visions North:
Talking About Yukon Land Claims

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TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS

A fledgling earns his wings

How a little airline is making dreams take flight

BY KATY MEAD

Air North is inspiring Vuntut Gwitchin Boyd Benjamin to follow his dreams from his community of Old Crow into the wild blue yonder.

"As a boy, out of my back window, I watched planes landing on and taking off from the runway behind my home in Old Crow," he says. "It was the beginning of my dream to become a pilot."

Benjamin is making that dream come true.

Mount Royal College in Calgary awarded the young man a scholarship, and he's now enrolled in the college's aviation program. Benjamin wants to be an Air North pilot by 2004.

But first, he's paying his dues, and earning his wings - on the ground.

Benjamin works for Air North during the summers. He spends his time working at the airline's Whitehorse-based maintenance facility - "on the ramp." He's handled baggage, guided aircrafts into position and refueled planes en route to his home community.

Old Crow is an isolated Northern community and the only Yukon community without road access. The people of Old Crow depend on regular Air North flights to deliver groceries, mail, furniture, building supplies, and of course, people. Air North has been integral to the lives of the Vuntut Gwitchin for 25 years.

And now, the airline is family, too.

The Vuntut Development Corporation, the self-governing First Nation's economic development arm, began investing in Air North two years ago. Today, the development corporation owns 48.9 per cent of the airline.

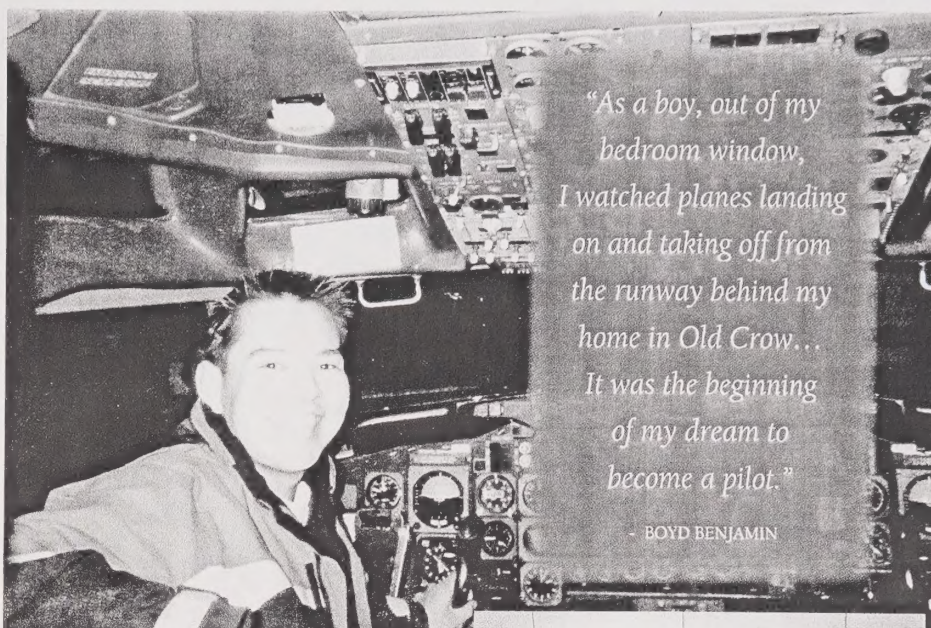
The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation is following a trend of Aboriginal-owned airlines. The Inuit of Nunavik's Makivik Corporation own First Air, Canada's largest Arctic airline, and the Inuvialut of the Western Arctic's Inuvialuit Development Corporation own Canadian North.

Air North operates out of Whitehorse, flying regularly to Edmonton, Calgary, Dawson City, Inuvik, Old Crow, Vancouver, Fairbanks, and Juneau.

Air North announced recently that it's buying two Boeing 737s for its southern routes with money from Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada's Major Business Projects Program and the Vuntut Development Corporation. The government is contributing \$1 million to Air North with a matching contribution from the development corporation.

That expansion is also allowing Air North to offer Yukoners more jobs and training.

The airline hired 30 more people—bringing its total number of staff to 58—to work on the new routes. Of these employees, 56 are Yukoners, and five are First Nations people.



Vuntut Gwitchin "Captain" Boyd Benjamin living his dream in the cockpit of an Air North Boeing 737. Benjamin is studying to become a pilot at Calgary's Mount Royal College; he'll earn his wings in 2004.

Ruby Williams, a member of the Taku River Tlingit First Nation, is one of those 30 new hires.

Williams praises Air North's strong team work ethic: "Knowing we have the backing of our co-workers allows our inner strengths to shine through for our passengers."

Air North, and its co-pilot the Vuntut Development Corporation, are flying straight to the top of the competitive airline market.

"As a boy, out of my bedroom window, I watched planes landing on and taking off from the runway behind my home in Old Crow... It was the beginning of my dream to become a pilot."

- BOYD BENJAMIN



"Please take your seat and fasten your seatbelt, because Air North is set to soar." Air North flight attendants serve Air North passengers with a smile. Ruby Williams (far left) is a Taku River Tlingit First Nation member.

Meet Dawson City's newest gem

From fish camp to red-light district to National Historic Site, Tr'ochëk is an archeological gold mine

BY ALISON BLACKDUCK

People have recognized Tr'ochëk as an invaluable resource for more than 10,000 years.

So it's not surprising that the federal Department of Canadian Heritage designated the former Hän fishing camp—now a unique treasure of a different kind—as a National Historic Site in July 2002.

Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps said last summer upon announcing Tr'ochëk's new status: "[This designation is] connecting Canadians to our roots, our future and each other."

Tr'ochëk is a triangular peninsula at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike rivers. People have been using the area for 11,000 years.

Bursting with blueberries and cranberries in the autumn, and visited each year by king and chum salmon returning from the frigid Bering Sea, Tr'ochëk was one of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's principle fish camps until the Klondike gold rush in 1896.

According to now-deceased Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in elder Lucy Wood, moose also once visited the marshy Tr'ochëk. They too were drawn by the area's bounty.

The berry patches of Tr'ochëk are still bearing fruit, but now as a National Historic Site that's owned and managed by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Tr'ochëk is offering the Hän and others new riches: a sense of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in history, a sense of Hän cultural pride, and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of wonder about those who came before.

Archeologically, Tr'ochëk is a gold mine.

Over the years, frequent flooding deposited silt on the triangular peninsula, leaving layer upon layer of history preserved in the ground.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens, whose land claim agreement came into effect in 1998, now manage those riches.

Jody Beaumont is a heritage officer for the self-governing Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in.

Beaumont says archeologists supervised archeology crews of mainly Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in high school students for a few seasons at the site beginning in 1998. She estimates that archeologists have done approximately four to five excavations at the site.

Now, Beaumont is working with the Tr'ochëk Steering Committee on the site's management plan. Beaumont expects federal government representatives to sign the plan

by the end of March 2003. And before the ink dries, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in will have taken a few more steps forward in implementing their final agreement.

But it wasn't always that way.

From the beginning of the gold rush until the mid-1990s, non-Aboriginal people took over Tr'ochëk, displacing and disregarding the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in who lived there.

During the height of the gold rush, Tr'ochëk was the site of the infamous red-light district called Lousetown. It was also home to the O'Brien Brewing and Malting Company and the Klondike Mines Railway.

During the 1970s, people began staking mineral claims at Tr'ochëk. A placer miner began working some of these claims in 1991, devastating 3.3 hectares of Tr'ochëk in the process. However, the federal government bought out the mining rights in 1997 and the three parties to the First Nation's land claims agreement later agreed to declare Tr'ochëk to be Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in settlement land and a heritage site that people must protect for "all time." (Under the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement, Tr'ochëk was known as the Tr'o-ju-wech'in Heritage Site.)

Today, Beaumont says protecting

Tr'ochëk means sharing it, so that everyone can learn the history of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, including crucial lessons about the importance of respecting First Nations people, their lands and their culture.



Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Elder Percy Henry shows Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizen Debbie Nagano a stone scraper excavated from the Tr'ochëk Heritage Site in the summer of 1999.

Everybody is on the invitation list to this year's Honoring Yukon First Nations events

Honoring Yukon First Nations celebrates the anniversaries of the tabling of *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*, the establishment of the Council of Yukon Indians, later the Council of Yukon First Nations, and the signing of the *Umbrella Final Agreement*.

Yukon First Nations, and other members of the public attended a logo (shown above) launch February 14, 2003 in Whitehorse to kick-off the celebrations. Hundreds of people filled the foyer of the Elijah Smith Building to hear First Nation and government dignitaries reflect on the theme Honoring Yukon First Nations.

Also on prominent display was a photo of the Yukon Native Brotherhood's historic February 1973 trip to Ottawa. The Yukon First Nations delegation travelled to Parliament Hill to deliver *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and his Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien.

The delegation included 12 Yukon First Nations chiefs, executive and administration staff. Dave



Joe, who was the Yukon Native Brotherhood's executive director at the time, remembers the group picture being taken in front of the Parliament buildings.

"It was a day filled with excitement, expectations and anticipation," recalls Joe. "We expected a major breakthrough on Canada's policy on treaties. Canada had not negotiated a treaty in the last 50 years preceding our arrival in Ottawa."

"We were hoping Canada would change that policy and begin to negotiate modern-day treaties. We were hoping the Yukon would be the first place to start."

"I was in awe. That day was our day, our chance to meet with Trudeau. I was filled with both hopeful anticipation but guarded optimism."

The Honoring Yukon First Nations Committee, working with the Gathering of Traditions Potlatch Society and the organizers of National Aboriginal Day, is also promising yet another exciting celebration on June 21, 2003 to honor Yukon First Nations.



The values of local knowledge

By combining traditional and scientific knowledge, local resource management is paying off

BY SAMANTHA MCCULLOCH

Combining traditional knowledge with science is paying off in the traditional territory of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. There, the Alsek Renewable Resource Council is proving that learning from local people leads to better decisions on renewable resources issues.

Under their final agreements, self-governing First Nations work with the territorial government to establish Renewable Resource Councils (RRCs) in their traditional territories. Seven RRCs currently exist in the Yukon.

The RRCs are independent, public interest, advisory bodies that may make recommendations to the federal, territorial and First Nations governments on any matter related to the conservation of fish and wildlife, the establishment and management of Special Management Areas, and the management of forest resources. Members are nominated by the local First Nation and the Government of Yukon's minister of the Environment.

The chair of the Alsek RRC, Rose Kushniruk, sees Renewable Resource Councils as a gift from the Yukon First Nations land claims process to all Yukoners.

"For the first time, local people have a tool at their disposal which is effective in influ-

encing government management processes," Kushniruk says. "The Alsek RRC's success is demonstrated by the fact that since its establishment in 1995, most of the recommendations it has made have been accepted and implemented by public governments."

Kushniruk adds that the key to success in these local resource management processes is teamwork and inclusiveness. Since its establishment, the Alsek RRC developed strong working relationships with both its government partners and local people.

"This was achieved by fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect," explains Kushniruk. "We encourage input from local people both through an open door policy and regular public meetings on the issues."

One of the Alsek RRC's many accomplishments is the delivery of the Aishihik Integrated Wildlife Management Plan.

Developed in partnership with the Government of Yukon, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, and local residents, the integrated wildlife management plan followed an intensive five-year management effort to rebuild the Aishihik caribou herd.

"The key to success in these local resource management processes is teamwork and inclusiveness."

— ROSE KUSHNIRUK, CHAIR OF ALSEK RRC



By combining traditional and scientific knowledge, the Alsek Renewable Resource Council developed a wildlife management plan that has successfully rebuilt the Aishihik caribou herd.

Kushniruk explains that one of the first steps in these planning processes is to gather traditional and local knowledge to supplement scientific knowledge. This has led to a positive shift in attitudes towards traditional and local knowledge.

"In the case of the Aishihik caribou herd, traditional and local knowledge identified a problem long before the scientific knowledge," reports Kushniruk. "Now, scientific, traditional and local knowledge are used together in our planning processes. In addition, seeking out traditional and local knowledge lets us identify problems and recommend management action before these problems become crises."

The Aishihik Integrated Wildlife Management Plan is the first ecosystem-based or "integrated" approach wildlife plan completed by the Alsek RRC. Instead of focusing on a single

species, like moose in the earlier Alsek Moose Management Plan, the integrated plan identifies and implements management actions to benefit all game species. A key component of the plan is to find ways to reduce the impact of predation on these populations.

The Alsek RRC has many other success stories, including introducing the first ever extended moose hunt in the Yukon, developing the first trapline assignment and re-assignment criteria to guide trapline allocation in Champagne and Aishihik's traditional territory, and intervening in the Aishihik Hydro water license application.

Since its establishment, the Alsek RRC has consistently demonstrated the value of including local people and their knowledge in the work of managing our renewable resources.

With files from the Alsek Renewable Resource Council. •

Business by consensus

With six First Nation communities owning the Yukon Inn, this hotel is managed like no other

BY BRIGITTE PARKER

Winter often brings a lull for the Yukon hotel industry. But on a cold January day, the staff at the Yukon Inn in Whitehorse are bustling about, showing guests to their rooms and answering the phone. In the lobby, a French film crew gathers to prepare for another day's shoot in the Yukon's winter wonderland.

New beds and furniture are being moved into some of the Inn's 90-plus guest rooms, while others are getting a fresh coat of paint, Internet hook-ups and wheelchair access ramps.

It's part of a capital improvement plan aimed at making the Inn more attractive to travelers and keeping it competitive with other local hotels.

Formerly known as the old Tourist Services building, the Yukon Inn and adjacent plaza were bought in 1996 by a group of six Yukon First Nations. At the time, the Kluane and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nations joined forces with four self-governing First Nations, Champagne and Aishihik, Little Salmon/Carmacks, Selkirk and the Teslin Tlingit Council, to reap the benefits of this economic opportunity.

The purchase made sense.

During the 1990s, many rural residents would come to Whitehorse for land claim negotiations. Often, they would stay at the Yukon Inn. "It was an opportunity for us to somehow capitalize in an indirect way on the fact that our community people were coming into Whitehorse to work on various issues related to the land claims negotiation process," explains Teslin Tlingit Chief Eric Morris.

"It is good to have six different perspectives when it comes to managing a business."

— TR'ONDEK HWËCH'IN CHIEF DARREN TAYLOR

The purchase was made possible by a loan from the First Nation Implementation Fund administered by the Council of Yukon First Nations. The fund is set aside through the Yukon land claims process to assist First Nation governments to implement their land claim agreements and to take advantage of opportunities, like economic development, that flow from these agreements.

For the new hotel owners, their first challenge was to quickly repay the purchase debt. Now, the partners are restructuring the internal management and using the hotel's monthly profits to make capital improvements.

What makes this venture profitable is the support it gets from communities. Not only do rural residents stay at the Yukon Inn and shop in the adjacent plaza, but they compel their leadership to consult with them on major decisions affecting the Yukon Inn. This requires six separate community consultations, each functioning by consensus.

"It takes a little bit more time in terms of decision making but on the other hand, it is good



The Yukon Inn's neon sign with its glowing paddle wheel is often a welcome sight for weary travelers to the Yukon looking for a home away from home.

to have six different perspectives when it comes to managing a business," says Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Chief Darren Taylor. "We tend to be a little more critical and nit-picky in ensuring that it works... Besides, if we didn't have buy-in from the community, projects wouldn't go ahead."

The spinoffs from investing in the Yukon Inn include training and employment opportunities for First Nation citizens in the hospitality industry, hiring First Nation contractors for the hotel upgrades, and eventual dividends to the owners.

As full partners, the six First Nations were able to pool their limited financial and technical resources and contribute equally to the business. The experience demonstrates that First Nations can successfully invest together.

"It is just a matter of taking it one step at a time, being very calculated in our maneuvers and staying positive," says Chief Morris. "This commitment to ourselves is really a huge step for us and I think it is really going to be a seed for future successes. •



Janelle Cletheroe, age six, reaped the rewards on the Ta'an Kwäch'an Council's first anniversary as a self-governing First Nation. The First Nation held an open house on January 13th, to celebrate 101 years to the day when their hereditary Chief Jim Boss wrote to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs: "Tell the King very hard, we want something for our Indians because they take our land and game."

Taxes 2002

TAX SEASON IS APPROACHING. IF YOU LIVE ON SETTLEMENT LAND OF AN AGREEING YUKON FIRST NATION, PLEASE REMEMBER TO INDICATE THIS ON THE RELEVANT SECTION OF YOUR INCOME TAX FORMS (T1, YT432 & YT479). THIS WILL ALLOW CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY TO ALLOCATE THE TAX REVENUES TO THE FIRST NATION GOVERNMENT.

visions north

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Contributors: Alison Blackduck, Alsek Renewable Resource Council, Brigitte Parker, Dave Joe, Jason Van Fleet, Kathleen Coventry, Katy Mead, Samantha McCulloch.

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visions north

TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS

Carcross/Tagish First Nation Signs Final Land Claim and Self-Government Agreements

On October 22, 2005, the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) signed its Final Land Claim and Self-Government agreements. The agreements came into effect shortly after the New Year, on January 9 of this year.

"I trust our ancestors are looking down and celebrating this accomplishment with us today. I hear the people expressing the need to move forward and to continue our building and healing process," said Khâ Shâde Hêni Mark Wedge, Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

The signing was the end result of years of negotiations between all parties to the agreement. "The team and community effort to get to this point in time has proven to be a huge task. It has not been without its pains and tribulations," added Chief Mark Wedge.

Carcross/Tagish First Nation is the eleventh First Nation to sign its Final Land Claim and Self-Government agreements, which sets the basis for new government-to-government relationships and a strengthened and forward-looking partnership.

Dancers, drummers and singers celebrated the historic moment with traditional dances and music.

"These agreements will bring real and meaningful benefits to all of us – Carcross/Tagish First Nation members, Yukoners and all Canadians alike," said Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie.

The land claim settlement provides the Carcross/Tagish First Nation with ownership and control over its settlement lands and opportunities to participate in planning land use of public lands within its traditional territory.

The agreement provides certainty by clarifying land and resource ownership, use and management. It provides a foundation for economic and resource development opportunities to promote the Carcross/Tagish people's participation in the Yukon's economy, along with the opportunity to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation.

The self-government agreement provides the Carcross/Tagish First Nation with tools to renew its historical self-reliance and traditional governance, to protect its land, languages and way of life, to strengthen its economy and community, and to chart its own future.

Negotiated under the terms of the Umbrella Final Agreement (1993), these agreements also contain specific provisions that address the particular interests and characteristics of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. ●



William & Winnie Atlin at the Carcross/Tagish signing ceremony.



Carcross/Tagish Chief Khâ Shâde Hêni (Mark Wedge).



Participants dress in traditional regalia at the Carcross/Tagish signing ceremony.



Carcross/Tagish dancer at the signing ceremony.



Geraldine James leads a welcoming song at the Carcross/Tagish signing ceremony.

WHAT IS VISIONS NORTH?

Visions North: talking about Yukon land claims is a bi-annual newsletter that raises awareness about land claims and self-government agreements, and related issues in Yukon First Nation and non-First Nation communities.

Visions North is produced and distributed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) with the participation of the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN).

The successes and challenges over the last ten years demonstrate that Yukon First Nations are raising their profile, increasing their influence and ensuring themselves a greater voice in issues that affect their lives.

WATER FACTS

- Each day humans must replace 2.4 litres of water, some through drinking and the rest taken by the body from the foods eaten.
- Canada has the largest wetland area in the world – about 25 % of the world's wetlands. They cover an area of 147.9 million hectares, which is about 14 % of the land area of Canada.
- The Great Lakes are the largest system of fresh, surface water on earth, containing roughly 18 % of the world supply, but the Great Lakes are not the biggest in Canada. Canada's largest lake is Great Bear Lake in the N.W.T. at 31 328 square kilometres.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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Aboriginal Science Camp A Success

Training Water Delivery Operators

Thumbs Up: The Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act is One of the Most Progressive in Canada



What does it mean for the Yukon public?

It has been a long road for YESAA, the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*. After the approval of federal regulations, the finalization of rules, the establishment of seven offices, and the hiring of close to 30 staff, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board, or YESAB, is open for business.

However, for a moment let's pull away the layers of acronyms, the legislative lingo and the long-winded titles to find out what started this new assessment regime and what it means for the Yukon public.

Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board: A Brief History

Chapter 12 of the Umbrella Final Agreement called for federal legislation establishing a development assessment process that would apply to all lands in the Yukon. Using the Umbrella Final Agreement as their guide, the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Government of Yukon worked jointly with the Government of Canada to establish a Yukon-specific development assessment process. The first draft of the legislation went out for public review in 1998 and seven years later, on November 28, 2005, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board became fully operational. It is now respon-

sible for conducting all development project assessments in the territory.

Opportunities for public participation

One of the unique aspects of *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*, is its focus on public participation in the assessment process. The board has six designated offices to give Yukoners local access to the assessment process and staff. They are in Watson Lake, Teslin, Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Mayo and Dawson City.

In addition, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board has included the YESAB Online Registry (YOR) on its website at www.yesab.ca. The web-based registry allows anyone to view any project in the Yukon, submit comments about projects, and receive notifications about particular project types or projects within a particular area. It can also be used to submit and track project proposals. Public computers are available in every YESAB office for assessment-related use, a toll-free number (1-866-322-4040) allows for no-charge calling, and the YESAB website has everything anyone needs to know about the organization or the assessment process.

With all these opportunities for public participation, and a legislative guarantee of full and fair consideration to all scientific information, traditional knowledge and other information provided during an assessment, Yukon has adopted one of the most progressive and publicly accessible assessment regimes in the country. Of course, it will be up to the Yukon public to use these new tools and participate.

**For information about YESAA, YESAB or the new assessment process check out www.yesab.ca, visit one of their offices, or call toll-free 1-866-322-4040.

YESAB Designated Office Locations

Yukon Environmental & Socio-economic Assessment Board

Head Office:

PO Box 31642, Whitehorse, Y1A 6L2
Location: 3059-3rd Avenue, Whitehorse
Telephone (867) 668-6420
Fax (867) 668-6425
Toll-free 1-866-322-4040.

Dawson City Designated Office

Bag 6050, Dawson City, Y0B 1G0
Telephone: (867) 993-4040
Fax: (867) 993-4049

Haines Junction Designated Office

PO Box 2126, Haines Junction, Y0B 1L0
Telephone: (867) 634-4040
Fax: (867) 634-4049

Mayo Designated Office

PO Box 297, Mayo, Y0B 1M0
Telephone: (867) 996-4040
Fax: (867) 996-4049

Teslin Designated Office

PO Box 137, Teslin, Y0A 1B0
Telephone: (867) 390-4040
Fax: (867) 390-4049

Watson Lake Designated Office

PO Box 294, Watson Lake, Y0A 1C0
Telephone: (867) 536-4040
Fax: (867) 536-4049

Whitehorse Designated Office

7209B - 7th Avenue, Whitehorse, Y1A 1R4
Telephone: (867) 456-3200
Fax: (867) 456-3209

First Nations Training Corps is a Gateway to Opportunity



Dave Sembsmoen is a fish and wildlife manager for the Kwanlin Dün Nation.

Dave Sembsmoen has always had an interest in fish and wildlife management. These days, he's a fish and wildlife manager for the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. He took the job after working with the Yukon government as the Southern Lakes fish and wildlife technician.

The Kwanlin Dün member and beneficiary is one of the graduates of the Yukon government First Nations Training Corps (FNTC). After two years of on-the-job training, which ended in February of 2005, Sembsmoen stayed on with the Yukon government.

"I found it a unique opportunity and I pounced on it," Sembsmoen said of the FNTC.

The First Nations Training Corps has been running since 1986, and is one of the ways the Yukon government meets its obligation to provide training under Chapter 22 of Yukon First Nation Final Agreements. The program emphasizes placing people of Yukon First Nation ancestry in technical, managerial, and professional positions

within the Yukon government which provides the program's core funding.

"Some First Nations and government departments contribute money to fund the training positions," said Marge Baufeld, a Representative Public Service Consultant, who manages the program from the Workplace Diversity Employment Office in the Yukon government's Public Service Commission.

"With the combined resources on an average year, FNTC hosts about 10 positions in various departments across government."

In fact, 69 percent of participants in the program are jointly sponsored by the Yukon and First Nation governments. Some take the training and then carry those skills back into their own governments.

The length of time participants spend in the program varies, but it's usually more than a year to make sure the training is comprehensive.

"Generally we want to provide enough training so they can go back to a First Nation office and perform full-function, or qualify to be part of a screening process here," added Baufeld.

For Sembsmoen, the First Nations Training Corps supplemented education programs he had already completed, including a seven-week course on land management provided by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada while he worked for the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. He had also put in two years toward a diploma of Renewable Resources from Yukon College, and the third year of an Applied Conservation Enforcement Program from Lethbridge College, before he entered the training corps. The FNTC gave him a foot in the door for government work, he said.

"I really think it was a valuable experience," said Sembsmoen. "It's very important for First Nations to get familiarity with government processes."

The program is a boon in several ways," said Rob Florkiewicz, the Yukon government biologist who supervises Sembsmoen.

"If [program participants] continue in the field, then it's likely I'll be working with them again later on. The familiarity enhances the ability to work with other organizations and people," said Florkiewicz.

"Trainees in resource management are likely to be working on shared projects and programs with Yukon, federal or First Nation governments in the future."

The program can also increase capacity in First Nation governments.

"If individuals choose to [work for the First Nation], they'll have experience to know what needs to be done," said Sembsmoen.

Program participants bring their First Nations' perspective to the issues they face on the job, which is good for the dialogue between First Nation governments and other governments.

"We learn how to improve our working relationship with our First Nation partners and for the community there is a level of comfort and trust when they're working with someone they know,"

SAID FLORKIEWICZ.

Sembsmoen began his new job on February 15th, and the Yukon government wishes him well. He is pleased with what the FNTC has done for him.

"It's essential to my resumé-building life. You can't put a value on that," he said.

** If you are interested in taking part in the Yukon government First Nations Training Corps, contact Marge Baufeld at 1(867) 667-3486, or toll-free at 1-800-661-0408 extension 3486.

News from the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council

First Nations should be able "to once again drink clean water directly from the Yukon River as our ancestors did for thousands of years before us," said tribal leaders at the 1997 summit in Galena, Alaska that birthed the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council (YRITWC). Their clearly articulated long-term vision has been the guiding light for the international non-profit organization, which has offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska and in Whitehorse, Yukon.

The fifty-six chiefs and elders who gathered at that summit discussed their worries about increased cancers and other health problems in humans and animals with the Yukon River watershed. They identified mining activities, military contamination, and industrial and residential solid waste as the main contributors to declining environmental quality and human health in the region. Based on their concerns, the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council aims to restore the river and to protect it from further contamination.

Today, 62 of the 76 tribal and First Nations governments within the watershed area actively participate in the Watershed Council through the signing and enactment of an Inter-Tribal Accord. The Accord notes that participating indigenous communities are all connected and have a common interest in protecting the watershed, and commits the signatories to cooperate and consult with one another on all actions that could affect the environmental and cultural integrity of the region, while respecting the interests of each tribe and First Nation. The document governs the coalition, articulating the commitments of the participants.

The Watershed Council is involved in a variety of projects. It recently teamed up with Yukon chapter staff of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) to complete a series of community information sessions on the extraction and processing of coal-bed methane. Together they brought a number of Canadian and American speakers to eleven First Nation communities and Whitehorse where they shared their personal experiences with coal-bed methane development within their regions.

As well, the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council's 5th Biannual Summit was held in August 2005 at Moosehide in Dawson City. Well over 250 people attended from the Yukon, Alaska, Wisconsin and Wyoming. They reflected on the goals of the organization, while staff provided



updates on Watershed Council activities. They also sought direction from tribal leaders, who directed them to develop an indigenous Youth Council. Over the next two years, the Yukon office will use grant money, provided by the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, to implement this project. The 6th Biannual Summit will be held in St. Mary's, Alaska in 2007.

Environment Canada has also provided the Watershed Council's Yukon office with funding to host a water quality monitoring training session. This training program will offer First Nations instruction on water quality monitoring concepts, exposure to equipment, and hands-on sampling and measuring opportunities. It will also offer exposure to data issues, site and timing concerns and computerized mapping applications of water quality data. The program aims to have First Nation citizens at multiple locations throughout the Yukon River watershed performing similar sampling activities with comparable equipment, procedures and analytical techniques to collect consistent data about water quality throughout the watershed.

There are currently eight members on the executive committee for the Yukon Region. The chairperson is a founding member of the Watershed Council, Harold Gatensby. He represents the Dahka Tlingit Nation. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in/Vuntut Gwitchin is represented by Chief Darren Taylor; and Chief Eddie Skookum represents the Northern Tutchone Tribal Council. The Kaska Tribal Council is represented by Sam Donnessey; Geraldine Pope represents the

Southern Tutchone Tribal Council; Jessie Dawson represents the Kwanlin Dün First Nation; and, Chief David Johnny represents the White River First Nation. Stanley James was recently appointed as the Elder on the committee.

**Please feel free to visit the Yukon Inter-Tribal Watershed Council website at www.yritwc.com. The Yukon regional director for YRITWC can be reached at (867) 393-2199 or at yritwc@northwestel.net

MORE WATER FACTS...

- Residential indoor water use in Canada: toilet – 30%; bathing and showering – 35%; laundry – 20%; kitchen and drinking – 10%; cleaning – 5%.
- Many homes lose more water from leaky taps than they need for cooking and drinking.
- A five-minute shower with a standard shower head uses 100 litres of water, where a low flow shower head uses only 35 litres.
- Toilets (while consuming nearly one quarter of our municipal water supply) use over 40% more water than needed.
- Freshwater lakes, rivers, and underground aquifers hold only 2.5% of the world's water. By comparison, saltwater oceans and seas contain 97.5% of the world's water supply.

Aboriginal Science Camp A Success

It was the summer of 2005 when over 60 Aboriginal youth from across Canada gathered in the Yukon for the fourth annual First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp, hosted by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Youth Employment Strategy. Camp participants travelled the Yukon, meeting people working in the science field. They witnessed how traditional knowledge overlaps with and complements scientific investigations into environmental issues in the Yukon Territory.

The participants camped. They visited ice patches in Kluane, where a 1400-year old moccasins was found to add to the artifacts that have emerged from the ice over the years. The participants heard teachings from Elders, learned about the salmon run at Klukshu, and hiked on the rock glacier. They made atlats, held an atlats competition, went to the Takhini Hot Springs and the Carcross/Tagish greenhouse, then marched across the Carcross Desert. They studied the forests, learning about the damage the spruce beetle has done to forests in the Yukon.

By the end of the week-long camp, they had learned about Aboriginal history, cultures and languages, climate change, Canada, and themselves. One group of friends took the opportunity to write a letter to camp organizers and they presented their message at the camp's closing ceremony.

Kwey Kakina,

Well, me and five other students embarked on a journey to the Yukon! We're all from the great province of Québec. This has been an awesome experience for each of us! But for some of us it felt like a National Science Boot Camp. We had two that didn't speak any English (they brought their own translator), two that were always asleep and two that couldn't keep their stuff together, and the best chaperones in the world.

The coolest driver ever. Our team managed to spend thousands of dollars on calling cards. It felt like we had a "Magic School Bus," being surrounded by the mountains, seeing all the weird bugs, emerald blue-coloured lakes, showers without hot water... even at the "hot springs!"

A few of us saw some bears but we had Georgie to keep us aware with his snoring... someone said so!

We learned that skipping one day of shower can be something we survive at, that we can clean our own dishes, that the sun never really goes down but the best, that we can sleep well in a tent, even when we have to move our incredible bad load of luggage every day.

I think everybody will always remember the trip. And how Yukoners were warm/welcoming to us. Not only the temperature, also how we ate.

But most of all the friendships that were started at this camp! I had a blast getting to know all you guys.

Migwetch to the organizers – you did a great job! All the chaperones that came and gave their time and energy and all the people who gave funds.

Migwetch, Nia wen, Merci, Thank You, Gwanaschis, Tshinashkumitin.



Participants in the First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp spent time in Kluane National Park.

The next First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp will be held in Quebec in the summer of 2006. For information about the Youth Employment Strategy, contact Frances Taylor at (867) 667-3364 or visit Indian Northern Affairs Canada Yukon Region's website http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/ae/sp/98-18_e.html

YUKON LAND CLAIMS SETTLEMENTS

Ten Yukon First Nations have signed and are implementing their final and self-government agreements. The first four agreements were signed in 1993 and became effective in 1995.

- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, 1995 (Haines Junction)
- First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, 1995 (Mayo)
- Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, 1995 (Old Crow)
- Teslin Tlingit Council, 1995 (Teslin)
- Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation, 1997 (Carmacks)
- Selkirk First Nation, 1997 (Pelly Crossing)
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, 1998 (Dawson)
- Ta'an Kwäch'an Council, 2002 (Whitehorse)
- Kluane First Nation, 2004 (Burwash Landing)
- Kwanlin Dün First Nation, 2005 (Whitehorse)
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation, 2006 (Carcross/Tagish)



Signing ceremony participants in their traditional dress.

Training Water Delivery Operators



Safe drinking water is an issue that affects all of us. In an effort that is the first of its kind in North America, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Yukon Region, the Government of Yukon, municipal and private sector volunteers, and the Yukon Water and Waste Association partnered to fund and develop a training course for Yukon's trucked-water system operators. The training course is aimed at helping ensure safe drinking water is available for all.

In early December 2005, 14 participants gathered for the inaugural "Bulk Water Delivery Operations in the Yukon" course. Eleven of the participants were Yukon First Nations, since the vast majority of Yukon water delivery operators are First Nation people.

In the past, courses have focussed primarily on larger municipal water systems that are not relevant to Yukon water systems or infrastructure.

The new course focuses on best practices and trucked water delivery operations in Yukon. By writing an exam at the end of the three-day course, water delivery operators may acquire a nationally recognized certification.

"I'm very grateful to the people from all levels of government and the private sector who formed this partnership and saw this project through to completion. Such cooperation and enduring commitment to improving the situation in

our industry is spectacular," said Kevin Rumsey, a Water Strategy Officer with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

"Bulk Water Delivery Operations in the Yukon" works to train and certify water delivery operators to national standards. The students learned about water sources, water quality, disinfection, sampling techniques, workplace safety, emergency response, and record keeping. Instructors from the British Columbia Water and Waste Association travelled to Whitehorse to help develop and instruct the course.

**For more information contact Kevin Rumsey, an INAC Water Strategy officer at (867) 667-3809, or project coordinator Dave Albisser with the Government of Yukon's Community Development Branch at (867) 667-5269.

AND MORE WATER FACTS

- About 82 % of our blood is water. It helps us digest our food, transport waste, and control body temperature. You can survive for about a month without food, but only five to seven days without water.
- It takes a lot of water to produce what we consume: approximately 10 litres of water is required to manufacture one litre of gasoline, around 300 litres of water is required to produce one kilogram of paper, and it takes about 215 000 litres of water to produce one metric ton of steel. A cow must drink 4.5 litres of water to produce one litre of milk.
- Once evaporated, a water molecule spends about 10 days in the air.
- Approximately 60 % of Canada's fresh water drains north, while 85 % of the population lives along the southern border with the United States.
- Water power meets about two thirds of the nation's electrical needs. To date, only about 40 % of Canada's hydroelectric potential has been developed.
- Water management is the subject of Chapter 14 in First Nation Final Land Claim Agreements.

Visions North

TALKING ABOUT LAND CLAIMS
Winter/Spring 2006 - Yukon Region

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This newsletter was produced through the efforts of many. A special thanks to the First Nation people and public service employees who provided information for the articles in this newsletter.

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Photographs courtesy of: Indian and Northern Affairs, Cathie Archbould, National First Nations and Inuit Science Camp participants, Government of Yukon, Lester Wilson

Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre : Visions du Nord

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TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS



Elder Percy Henry addresses the crowd at Forty Mile.



Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Chief Darren Taylor and MLA Brad Cathers sign a historic agreement.



Musicians at the Forty-Mile signing celebration.

Preserving the Sights at Historic Sites

Documented history in the Yukon tends to focus on the Gold Rush. However, Forty Mile, near Dawson City, has history that goes back much farther than 1898. In the course of working toward the *Forty Mile, Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine Historic Site Management Plan*, archaeologists found that the site has been occupied for much longer.

Forty Mile is a traditional caribou hunting and fishing area. An ancient arrowhead discovered at the site shows that it has been used for at least two millennia by the First Nations in the area.

As is outlined in the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement, the site is now jointly owned by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Yukon government. On June 11, 2006, at Forty Mile, officials signed the documents that laid out how the management plan will work.

"Forty Mile is vital to understanding the story of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Yukon Territory," Chief Darren Taylor said. "We are happy to work with the Yukon government to protect and celebrate the value of this important historic site."

"Forty Mile is vital to understanding the story of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Yukon Territory."


CHIEF DARREN TAYLOR

As well as archaeological investigations, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Yukon government's Department of Tourism and Culture have carried out other work at Forty Mile such as building stabilization, site maintenance and interpretation.

The management plan is a first step in the conservation of heritage resources around Forty Mile, and a requirement under the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Final Agreement.

"This is an important day for Forty Mile," Tourism and Culture Minister Elaine Taylor said in recognition of the day of the signing. "This

management plan is the culmination of several years work, and will provide sound guidance for the cooperative management of the cultural and natural resources at this very important historic site."

The work done in the course of preparing the site management plan has led to other projects as well. For instance, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and the Government of Yukon have published the booklet *Archaeology at Forty Mile/Ch'ëdä Dëk*, which is an overview of archaeological studies that reveal the history of Forty Mile. 

"This is an important day for Forty Mile. This management plan is the culmination of several years work, and will provide sound guidance for the cooperative management of the cultural and natural resources at this very important historic site."

YUKON MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE
ELAINE TAYLOR

WHAT IS VISIONS NORTH?

Visions North: talking about Yukon land claims is a bi-annual newsletter that raises awareness about land claims and self-government agreements and related issues in Yukon First Nation and non-First Nation communities.

Visions North is produced and distributed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) with the participation of the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN).

The successes and challenges over the last ten years demonstrate that Yukon First Nations are raising their profile, increasing their influence and ensuring themselves a greater voice in issues that affect their lives.

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The Porcupine River winds through the North Yukon.

Seeing the Future in Tradition: North Yukon Land Use Plan Combines Traditional Knowledge and High Tech

Accurate information provides a foundation for good land use planning. In order to collect the best information possible, the North Yukon Planning Commission has documented traditional and scientific knowledge about the North Yukon planning region. Information gathered by working with Vuntut Gwitchin Elders, researchers and land management agencies is being incorporated into the land use plan for the area.

Development of the regional land use plan is provided for in Chapter 11 of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement. The North Yukon Planning Commission is working in partnership with government agencies, boards and other groups to produce it. The Commission is to draft and recommend to Yukon and the First Nation a plan to apply to both Settlement Land and Non-Settlement Land outside of national parks or historic sites and communities. The plan is expected to include management objectives and guidelines for the planning region.

On behalf of the Commission and in accordance with Chapter 11 requirements, the Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Department consulted with Old Crow Elders and community members like Stephen Frost and Charlie Thomas to gather, document, and map important traditional use and wildlife areas. So far, more than 50 different community members have shared their expertise about the planning region. Their information has been used to create a regional assessment of conservation, economic and cultural values for the North Yukon.

"Information collection for the North Yukon land use plan gave us the opportunity to utilize our oral history collection and to work with Elders and current resource users to plan how they and their descendants will continue to use and manage the land in the future," said Megan Williams, Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Manager.

Using the collected data, a computer model is being used to study the potential ecological, economic and social effects of possible future land uses. This planning approach will provide information for decision-makers about the potential outcomes of different land use strategies. Land management strategies and activities that lead to desirable outcomes can then be selected and recommended by the land use plan, ultimately fostering the principles of sustainable development.

A draft regional land use plan is expected to be ready for government and public review by late 2006.

** To learn more about the North Yukon Planning Commission and the North Yukon regional land use plan, please visit www.nypc.planyukon.ca or contact the Senior Planner at 867-668-7663, shawn@planyukon.ca.

The Commission wishes to extend a special thank you to our major plan partners: Vuntut Gwitchin Natural Resources Department, Yukon Department of Environment, Yukon Department of Energy Mines and Resources, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, and Environment Canada.



VGFN Heritage Officers discuss heritage values and traditional use with Old Crow Elders in October 2004



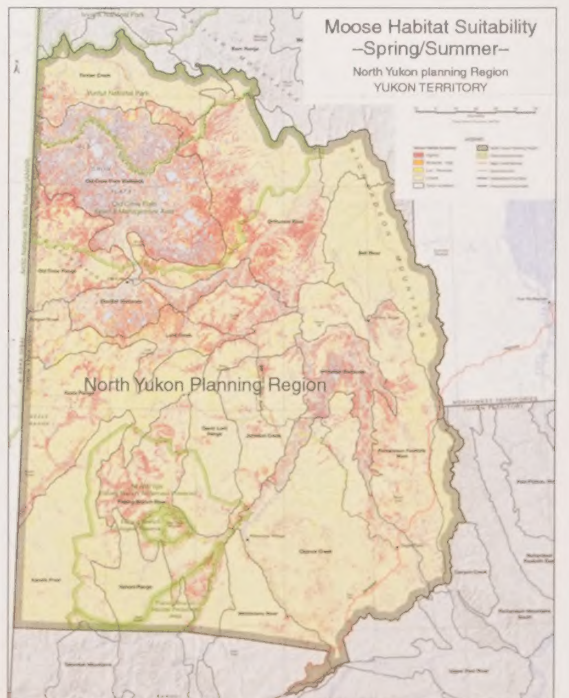
VGFN Heritage Officers and NYPC members discuss heritage and traditional values with Old Crow Elders.



NYPC members discuss traditional values and place names with Old Crow Elders in October 2004.

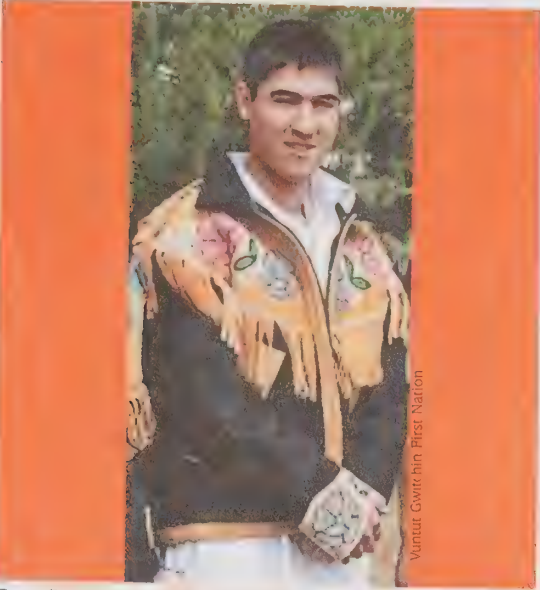


NYPC land use planner and a commission member discuss wildlife and fisheries values.



Spring-summer moose habitat suitability map developed through combination of Old Crow traditional knowledge and biophysical mapping.

From Old Crow to Halifax



Travis Frost at the 2006 First Nation graduation ceremony.

Travis Frost is a science fair veteran. This summer was his third trip to a Historica science fair. This time, though, he didn't present a project. Instead, he guided four younger students through the Halifax Historica fair, which was held in July.

Frost is an old hand at this kind of thing. He travelled to Kamloops, B.C., in 2002, to present a model of the modern-day Old Crow, accompanied

by a project which traced the history of his community. Two years later, he sent a project to a second science fair, telling another story that was close to home for him: the story of the porcupine caribou herd. Frost has always focussed his work on his home area.

"We live off the land, and it's pretty important to us," said Frost, sitting just outside the entryway to the Gadzoosdaa student's residence in Whitehorse. "I think we need to get the word out there. It's important for people to know where we're coming from, trying to save the caribou."

The Vuntut Gwitchin land claims are something that Frost thinks everyone should understand. "I love my heritage," he said. "It's important to know about it. I'll take my knowledge about land claims to Halifax."

Frost wants to pass on what he has learned from his family in Old Crow. He was raised learning traditional skills from family members: spending time hunting martin with this grandfather in winter, hunting ducks and muskrats in spring, and harvesting caribou in the fall. Frost's father, Harold, is a renowned dog musher and has passed the skill and sport down to his sons. Frost has been mushing dogs ever since he can remember.

"We have always had dogs and have been taught how to care for them and handle them," he said. Now that the science fair is over, Frost intends to return to Old Crow until he decides on his next step.

"We live off the land, and it's pretty important to us. I think we need to get the word out there. It's important for people to know where we're coming from, trying to save the caribou."

"I love my heritage. It's important to know about it. I'll take my knowledge about land claims to Halifax."

Travis Frost



Students watch and learn how to set up a trap.

Yukon Trappers Take On the World

Of late, fur has become the versatile fabric of choice and is in vogue once again. In an effort to increase the value and demand for Yukon furs, Yukon Trappers Association introduced the *Klondike Soft Gold* label with support from the Government of Yukon via its departments of Economic Development and Environment. Working with the Fur Harvesters Auction of North Bay, Ontario, *Klondike Soft Gold* has joined similar initiatives with the Northwest Territories and Nunavut under the brand *Northern Canadian Wild Fur Collection*. This tri-lateral initiative ensures the fur industries remain integral parts of our northern economies.

"The Yukon Trappers Association and our partners have been developing and promoting the Yukon's wild fur industry, particularly with our lynx," says association manager Jackie Yaklin. "We are proud of our high quality northern furs and the *Klondike Soft Gold* campaign is gaining recognition throughout the fur world. Furthermore, our Yukon lynx are acclaimed, both nationally and internationally, as one of the most exquisite furs in North America."

During the past two years, lynx pelts marketed under the *Klondike Soft Gold* label, received the top lot price.

Trapping is a unique way of life and a demanding trade. While it may sound cliché, trappers truly are the eyes and ears on the land. They provide a wealth of information about animal health, species status, range distribution and more recently, the effects of climate change on our northern eco-systems.

Chapter 16 of the Umbrella Final Agreement addresses the management, use and conservation of fish and wildlife populations in the Yukon. The Government of Yukon and the Yukon Trappers Association have joined to support this grassroots industry. Together they have invested considerable resources in promoting and educating Yukon trappers, residents and visitors about the trapping community and its contributions towards the social, cultural and economic health of the territory.

The Yukon Trappers Association, with support from the Yukon government, delivers a comprehensive trapper training program to both new and experienced trappers. The program emphasizes humane harvesting, biologically sound furbearer management and proper pelt handling for maximum financial return. The Yukon Trappers Association has also assisted the Yukon government with trap replacement programs and

introduced traps that meet international humane thresholds throughout the Yukon.

**For information on *Klondike Soft Gold* label or the Yukon Trappers Association phone 667-7091.

"We are proud of our high quality northern furs and the *Klondike Soft Gold* campaign is gaining recognition throughout the fur world. Furthermore, our Yukon lynx are acclaimed, both nationally and internationally, as one of the most exquisite furs in North America."

YUKON TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION MANAGER
JACKIE YAKLIN



Reading buddies enjoy a literary break.

Texts Reflect Yukon First Nations' Traditions

Yukon First Nations are renowned for their storytelling and oral teaching traditions, and now more of that information is moving into Yukon schools, thanks to a series of seven books for young readers focussed on Yukon First Nations' culture.

The texts are part of the Government of Yukon's effort to increase First Nation student success and develop curricula and programs that bring Yukon First Nations' culture into the classroom. Government of Yukon staff are collaborating with several First Nation curriculum advisory working groups to ensure that the content of all new First Nations curriculum is culturally accurate and relevant.

The early reader books feature adults and children from Yukon communities, and reflect the lives and culture of Yukon First Nation people. *New Slippers* and *Hot Moose Stew* are about traditional First Nations knowledge and skills. *My Grandpa* recounts the story of a relationship between an Elder and his grandson, and a third book in the series called *Big Things and Little Things* talks about tools and regalia of cultural significance to First Nation people.

School administrators and teachers have welcomed the books as positive teaching tools.

"I find when students see their own culture reflected back at them in the pages of one of the early reader books, they are more interested in reading and engaging in learning," said John Wright, Principal at Elijah Smith Elementary.

Sharon Jacobs, First Nation education consultant at the Department of Education, said the books are a positive step. "We are working on many different curriculum projects to help the Yukon classroom become a more culturally relevant place to learn. The early reader books are certainly a step in that direction," she said.



A new reading series focuses on First Nation traditions.

Jacobs and her colleague Jeanette McCrie, who is the Coordinator of Primary Programs, were involved in the development of the early reader books, which are available in French and English, for now. Yukon First Nation language translations will be undertaken soon and several new titles are being written.

"Developing materials and resources that bring Yukon First Nations' culture and land claims into the classroom means that our education system can be more engaging, particularly for First Nation students," added Jacobs.

"The integration of Yukon First Nations' culture into the realm of learning is a priority for us. The early reader books and the funding this government has provided for cultural enhancement in schools is a good start in introducing more First Nations culture into the classroom," said Minister of Education, Patrick Rouble.

**For more information on First Nation curriculum projects, please call Clea Ainsworth at 393-7102.

"I find when students see their own culture reflected back at them in the pages of one of the early reader books, they are more interested in reading and engaging in learning."

JOHN WRIGHT, PRINCIPAL AT ELIJAH SMITH ELEMENTARY

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIJAH SMITH ELEMENTARY

"In addition to orienting new teachers on Yukon First Nation culture, inviting Elders into the schools, providing funding for cultural enhancement and offering Yukon First Nation language programs to students, we are seeking out even more ways to ensure that we develop an education system that's reflective of the culture and values of Yukon," said Minister of Education, Patrick Rouble.

Classroom Culture

Strong and lasting educational knowledge is a theme that runs throughout the Umbrella First Agreement, including strong First Nation content that provides to all students a more meaningful, respectful and practical for Yukon students.

That emphasis on the materials under development is a curriculum as traditional Yukon First Nations government for children and a course in culture, history, law and land claims for children. The Government of Yukon and the Yukon First Nations are working closely with the Yukon First Nation Education Advisory Committee and its working groups to develop these materials.

"In addition to orienting new teachers on Yukon First Nation culture, inviting Elders into the schools, providing funding for cultural enhancement and offering Yukon First Nation language programs to students, we are seeking out even more ways to ensure that we develop an education system that's reflective of the culture and values of Yukon," said Minister of Education, Patrick Rouble.

The introduction of new First Nation curriculum materials will help increase the success rates among First Nations students.

"It's very important for the school community to embrace First Nation culture and demonstrate its value to students," said Minister Rouble. "We look forward to continuing our work of enhancing cultural curriculum and programming in the Yukon education system."

**For more information on First Nation curriculum projects and cultural enhancement funding, please call Clea Ainsworth at 393-7102.

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Photographs courtesy of: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Native Arts and Culture Council of Yukon

Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee

Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee

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Dan Ford, shown here at Mobile Maintenance, benefited from training with Skills Canada Yukon's Skills Centre in Whitehorse. The Centre builds partnerships with industry employers, educators, First Nations and other organizations that serve youth. For more information about how you can benefit from their programs, visit their website at www.skillsyukon.com or call 867-668-2736.

Southern Tutchone Language Lessons

Kindergarten students at St. Elias Community School in Haines Junction are now enjoying a curriculum enhanced with lessons in the Southern Tutchone language and culture.

The community recently celebrated the launch of the pilot program at the school gymnasium. The event was led by Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Chief, Diane Strand, Education Minister, Patrick Rouble, the school council, and the many people who worked on the program's development.

"The launch of the bi-cultural program is an important milestone for the Department of Education, Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and the St. Elias School Council," Minister Rouble said. "I commend the contributors for their innovation and creativity to bring local wisdom and culture to the curriculum."

"This project is the result of a collective dream and desire to revitalize our language and our culture, and it is good to see those dreams finally being brought to fruition," Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Chief Diane Strand said. "Much hard work has taken place to get this project ready to be delivered, and I greatly appreciate the efforts of the many people who played an integral role in getting this project off the ground but also acknowledge that there is still a lot of work left to be done."

Language lessons began on September 21, 2009, for kindergarten students and will continue through Grade 2. The pilot will run for three years and then be evaluated. The vision is to promote awareness and sensitivity of Yukon First Nations culture while promoting pride and belonging amongst First Nation students. A long-term hope is for greater fluency in the Southern Tutchone language in the community.



Students talk about the Gopher Story and examine a gopher skin blanket and other artifacts with Richard Smith of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation Heritage Department.

Students have already begun to talk in sentences about the weather, various things in the environment and themselves.

The program aims to enhance the academic performance and parental satisfaction for the participating students. Plus, the framework for the program can be adapted to suit other First Nations and other schools.

"I am optimistic that this program will be a success, for it is through the vision of our people, the wisdom of our Elders and the promise of our youth that our culture, language, and values will thrive," Chief Strand added.

Integrating Southern Tutchone language and culture into the classroom supports preservation of the language and culture by promoting students' intellectual development and improving their motivation. In this way, it will improve achievement for all students, and help to eliminate the achievement gap between First Nation and non-First Nation students.

Principal Ruth Lawrence at 867-634-2231 or ruth.lawrence@gov.yk.ca

WHAT IS VISIONS NORTH?

Visions North is a bi-cultural program that provides a framework for the development of a curriculum that integrates the language and culture of the First Nations of Yukon into the education system.

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Keeping Language Alive: Emma Sam

...in the Teslin dialect of Tlingit you wouldn't say hello or goodbye, just "How are you? Mâ sâ iyati" or "I'll see you again, Tsu yé ikhwatin."

Tlingit Elder, Emma Sam grew up speaking the Tlingit language. "I always feel like I've had my language all my life. I didn't have to learn my language. I was born with it." For many First Nations people today that is not the case, but there is a strong movement for people of all ages to learn now. Emma Sam made a conscious decision not to forget her language and she's been helping others to learn it since the early 1970s. "People are aware that they have to be proud of who they are and where they come from."

When Emma realised that her language was beginning to die out with the Elders, she decided that as a fluent speaker she could help to keep it alive. She has taught in Whitehorse schools, during women's sewing classes and as a translator and interpreter for 13 years with the territorial Aboriginal Language Services Branch.

This work, and her contribution to three books about learning and translating Tlingit, helped her win this year's Council of the Federation Literacy Award. When Yukon Minister of Education, Patrick Rouble, asked her how he should say congratulations in Tlingit, she told him, "in Tlingit you don't say congratulations, you just say I'm happy for you."

There are many differences between English and Tlingit. For example in the Teslin dialect of Tlingit you wouldn't say hello or goodbye, just "How are you? Mâ sâ iyati" or "I'll see you again, Tsu yé ikhwatin."

Emma doesn't think of herself as a role model but her students disagree, saying that all Elders

are role models in some way. Every Tuesday and Thursday from 1-2pm Emma teaches Tlingit at the Council of Yukon First Nations. The class is open to anyone who is interested in learning Tlingit and challenging themselves to learn what is thought to be the second hardest language in the world. Emma jokingly says since she can already speak Tlingit her next goal is to learn the hardest language, Xhosa, the South African language known for its clicking sounds.

Members of Emma's class are learning that introducing yourself is one of the most important things in Tlingit. Your introduction tells much more than your name, it tells your

history, whether you are wolf or crow clan, who your parents are and where you come from "Language is who we are. Within language, we learn all our sacred Tlingit values and teachings, we learn our Tlingit laws we learn everything about being a Tlingit people."

The Council of Yukon First Nations offers free lessons in Tlingit, Gwitchin, Southern Tutchone and Northern Tutchone as a part of its overall language programming.

Gayle Corry at 867-393-9201 or gayle.corry@cyfn.net



Emma Sam (centre) with two of her students.

More Yukon First Nations Books Released!

Two new books featuring Yukon First Nations' stories were introduced to elementary schools throughout the territory in the spring of 2009.

"The release of these books is one example of Yukon's ongoing work with First Nations to improve academic achievements for First Nation students," said Education Minister Ann Leary. "However, all Yukon students will appreciate the Yukon themes and benefit from the local First Nation cultural content."

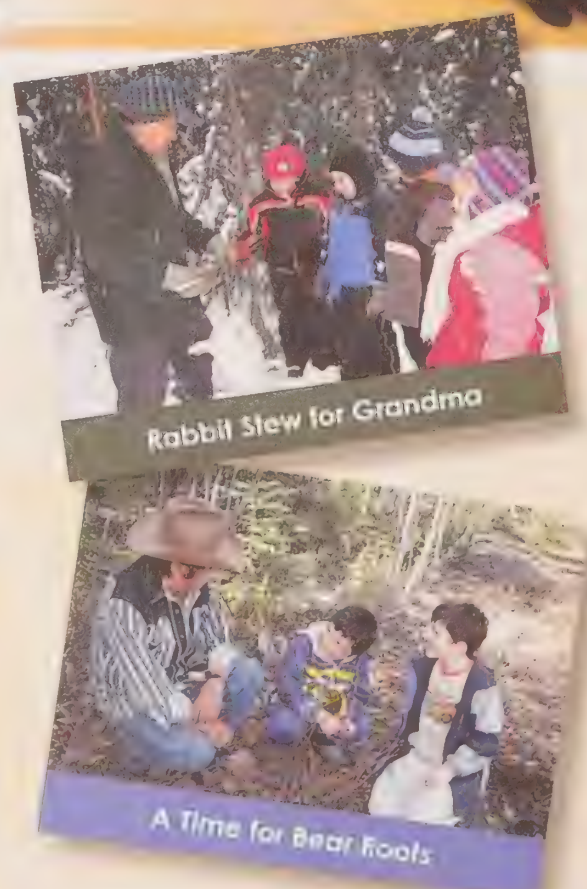
The authors of the books *A Time for Bear Roots*, written by Rosemary Popadynec and *Rabbit Stew for Grandma*, written by Maggie Leary, are teachers at J.V. Clark School in Mayo. The two books feature the school's staff, students and First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun Elders.

The two books were developed collaboratively by the NorthWind Books working group, a sub-committee of the Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee. This group consists of representatives from the Department of Education staff, from the First Nations Program and the Yukon First Nations Education Advisory Committee. The group has supported the development of the books.

"It is very exciting to see more local books being developed. It is important for students to experience the traditional knowledge and skills of their Elders firsthand," said Fran Etzel, a member of NorthWind Books working group. "Students now have an opportunity to learn, appreciate, respect and experience First Nation culture from their own classroom. This is a great start! I look forward to assisting with the development of more books for our schools."

The first set of books featuring Yukon First Nations content was published in 2003, when seven books were produced by the publisher Eaglecrest Books. Since then, nine books have been published by the Department of Education under the NorthWind Books label. Currently, the First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit is working on adapting the books for use in Yukon First Nation language programs. Adaptations will also include lesson plans for the language teachers to use in their classrooms.

The Department of Education now has a total of 16 books under the NorthWind Books and Eaglecrest Books labels.



A teacher's guide for the books is currently in development. The guide will include cultural information and classroom activities for teachers to use before, during and after the stories are read. PDF files of the two new books are available at

www.yesnet.yk.ca/firstnations/index.html

Mayo Residents Celebrate Culture Through Yukon College Program

A Heritage and Culture Essential Skills program that was delivered at the Mayo campus of Yukon College earlier this year has given residents a new appreciation of their culture, taught them new skills and created employment opportunities.

The Na-Cho Nyäk Dun First Nation and Yukon College collaborated on the six-month program for heritage work that included a variety of topics such as filmmaking, genealogy and interviewing.

Irene Johnny, one of a dozen participants, is a mature student who has since been hired as the Acting Heritage Officer with the First Nation. "I'm glad I took the program and I think it brought the Heritage Department together and made us stronger," Johnny said.

Since taking the program, Johnny has coordinated Aboriginal Day celebrations in Mayo and has had the opportunity to search for artifacts in the remote Bonnet Plume River area of northern Yukon.

Joella Hogan, the Heritage Manager with the First Nation, helped develop the course outline. As a result of the program the First Nation is better equipped to implement Chapter 13 on

heritage as defined in their Final Agreement. "We now have a better team that is able to work with our partners in terms of heritage planning," Hogan said.

"Before the program there was a lot of turnover in the department, but now if we are going to work on a genealogy project, we can pull in Irene and someone else who took the course with her, to work on it."

As a result of the program, the First Nation was also able to hire Nicole Hutton, a young Na-Cho Nyäk Dun citizen, for a two year Heritage Technician position.

"We're so much better now at promoting our culture and I think people feel more proud when they know how to display it properly," said Hogan.

John Reid, Coordinator of the Mayo Community Campus says courses such as filmmaking opened people's eyes to modern story telling and showed the limitless possibilities of recording Elders' stories and collecting traditional knowledge.

Stefanie Richardson at 867-668-8800 or sfrichardson@yukoncollege.yk.ca



Irene Johnny from Mayo took the Heritage and Culture Essential Skills Program earlier this year and has since been hired by Na-Cho Nyäk Dun's Heritage Department.



Irene designed and crafted a set of miniature wall tents that were used in the cultural exhibit at the end of the program.

Learning Southern Tutchone:

Dänji	Groundhog
Tsäl	Gopher
Kwänzhia	Chipmunk
Shär	Bear

Chìch'a DàKwach'e?	How is it outside?
Chìch'a - K'uk K'ùlj	Cloudy
Chìch'a - Shà Njshà	Rainning
Chìch'a - Kwä K'ü	Cold
Chìch'a - Yäw' nìKhyäw	Snowing

Dännch'e	How are you?
äghajänà ich'e	I am a girl
Däk'an ich'e	I am a boy
nädhat	Stand up
ndá	Sit down

Counting how many years old you are	
läch'i	1
täki	2
tayke	3
dük'wän	4
Kèjan	5



Partnership Will Improve Workforce Engagement

A new education initiative called the Education and Employment Training (EET) program, delivered in partnership with Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) and Yukon College, is geared toward improving workforce engagement.

"This is a meaningful initiative that will have long-term impacts for the citizens of Kwanlin Dün First Nation," said KDFN Education and Social Assistance Director Art Stephenson. The program will help address the academic, employment and life skill needs of adult learners.

"The EET program supports Yukon's commitment to work with partners to enhance transitions between different levels of education, training and the world of work," Education Minister Patrick Rouble said.

The program also provides Kwanlin Dün citizens with access to supportive expertise in the development of a comprehensive, long-term, community-based education plan. "We are very excited to be a part of the program and we look forward to engaging in this work with our partners," Yukon College's Dean of Applied Science and Management Shelagh Rowles said.

The EET program is the first project to be funded under Yukon's new Labour Market Agreement (LMA) with the Government of Canada.

For more information contact: Cathy Borsa at 867-633-8422 ext 7896 or cborsa@yukoncollege.yk.ca





"It was the best week I ever had."

Experiencing Science in Action

Brittney learns how to put out a fire as part of the annual First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp in Yellowknife.

Natane Primozic, Anthony Primozic, and Brittney Brown from Champagne & Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) were chosen to participate in this year's First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp in Yellowknife from July 12-19, 2009. Students gained hands-on experience with science and science-related careers and the education needed to pursue these careers. Monica Primozic, one of the camp chaperones, asked the students to describe their experiences.

Monica: What did you learn at the camp?

Natane: I learned about northern plants, permafrost, composting chemical wastes, ATV mechanics, airport technology and also about different cultures from across Canada.

Anthony: I learned that getting up early is a real pain! I learned that there are many science careers out there, like being on the radio, working in the bush with permafrost, or being a renewable resource officer.

Monica: What was your favourite presentation?

Brittney: I liked the fire safety where we were taught how to put out fires using the equipment like fire extinguishers and hoses.

Natane: I really liked the traditional medicines presentation because I am very interested in different cultures.

Monica: Are you planning to further your education and in what area?

Anthony: I am interested in renewable resources because it's a fun job being in the bush and looking after wildlife.

Brittney: I want to learn more about health and maybe be a nurse.

Monica: What else can you tell us about your science camp experience?

Natane: It was fun and knowledgeable. I enjoyed meeting new people and learning new things.

Anthony: I got to meet new friends and also go on the radio on CKLB. It was the best week I ever had.

Brittney: It was very fun meeting new people and learning other First Nation cultures. I liked learning about another area, and things that it can offer, and how that is different from where I live.



Anthony learns about preparing a hide at the annual First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp in Yellowknife.

Frances Taylor at 867-667-3364
or Frances.Taylor@inac-ainc.gc.ca

Help make Visions North even better!

Please send your feedback to
ytinfo@inac-ainc.gc.ca
or call 1-800-661-0451
and ask for Communications.



Scribing is the process of marking a log to fit the log below it. Students shown here are learning the skill as part of the 2008-2009 Log Building Training Program hosted by the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyäk Dun. For more information contact the Training Policy Committee at 867-668-7812.

Visions North
Talking about Yukon Land Claims
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TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS



Carcross/Tagish First Nation and the Dakka Kwaan Dancers

Carcross/Tagish First Nation's Return to Value-Based Governance

In the past, values were the most coveted and esteemed part of Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) governance and deeply embedded in its culture, society and traditional Clan System.

The traditional way of governance known as the Clan System provides a "voice" to each individual person while ensuring that the concept of group and community prevails.

Today, Khà Shâde Héni, or Chief, Mark Wedge of CTFN envisions a re-emerging value-based governance structure with a foundation of Dakká Tlingit and Tagish Kwáan traditional values.

For example, the CTFN Family Act highlights eight main values, which are derived from 150 traditional stories and legends.

These eight values – selflessness, honour, respect, courage, integrity, knowledge, compassion and honesty – provide the structure and guidelines as to how people conduct themselves in life and in governance.

"When we look at the codes of conduct, it is about those virtues and values and how we want to reflect them," says Wedge. "By doing that, we are carrying on the traditions of our ancestors. I think it is about the virtues and values and being able to express them and to bring them into how we conduct ourselves and how we conduct our affairs."

Traditional leaders were once raised and taught to live a life with these values personified in their every word, action, thought and intention. If a person was to

behave outside these values and expected standards, consequences extended beyond the individual and became the responsibility of his or her entire clan.

As the CTFN government transitions from the Indian Act to one with the powers to create legislation and define its own destiny, CTFN recognizes the challenges of instilling a traditional system within a modern context.

The goal is a transition that reaches beyond changes to the CTFN political structure and extends to individual community members in a vision of self-determination that is relevant, meaningful and sustainable – a vision for CTFN grounded by the teachings of its ancestors.

For more information contact:

Marilyn Jensen at 867.821.8222.

Lights! Camera! Action on Self-Government!

Very few Canadians realize that 11 of the Yukon's 14 First Nations are on the cutting edge of Self-government in Canada and even fewer are aware of the profound changes, challenges and opportunities Self-government lends First Nations communities and the entire territory.

To this end, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Yukon Region is creating a video illuminating how Self-government is transforming the lives of First Nations in the Yukon.

The 10-minute piece will focus on Yukon First Nations successes and raise awareness of their models of governance for other governments and all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

While built on a framework of fact and information, the video will convey its message through interviews and personal portraits and evocative scenes that celebrate First Nations history, heritage, traditional music and dance.

For more information contact:

Line Gagnon at 867.667.3315 or line.gagnon@inac-ainc.gc.ca

WHAT IS VISIONS NORTH?

Visions North: talking about Yukon and sharing the bi-annual newsletter that raises awareness about land claims and self-government and related issues in Yukon communities.

Visions North is produced and distributed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) with the participation of the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN).



Premier Dennis Fentie, CAFN Chief Diane Strand and Yukon College President Terry Weninger

"The Knowledge is in the Room"

Yukon First Nations (YFN) have big responsibilities and plenty of plans, but it can be challenging to implement them within the Yukon government.

In 2005, CAFN began investigating ways to become a more effective organization. After exploring the vision and goals for such capacity development, the First Nation established partnerships to work on a program to develop leadership and management skills.

As a result, CAFN, with the Yukon government and Yukon College, is piloting an Executive Development Program. The program is an accredited one-year Yukon College certificate in Northern governance with a specific focus on self-governance under the Yukon First Nations Final and Self-government Agreements.

"Our goal is to increase executive leadership capacity within our First Nation," said Suzanne Green, CAFN Director of Education and program steering committee member.

According to the students and organizers, the program are top-quality instruction and the opportunity to develop curricula relevant to CAFN.

"We have an amazing set of instructors and guest lecturers we've been able to draw on," continued Green. "Many of them were instrumental in the ground-level formation of Yukon First Nations governance and can combine classroom theory with practical, relevant examples of our recent history."

The upcoming course, Land Claims and Governance, is being led by Mary Penikett, joining her as guest lecturer will be John Penikett, a Yukon citizen who was the Yukon's first Aboriginal lawyer and recently named an Officer of the Order of Canada.

Penikett is now a Vancouver-based mediator and teaches courses in negotiations at Simon Fraser University.

"Thanks to the hard work of CAFN staff and Yukon College instructors and staff and the support of the Yukon government, we are accomplishing the development of a program that reflects CAFN realities and meets academic standards, allowing for transferability to other colleges," said Shelagh Rowles, Dean of the Yukon College Division of Applied Science and Management.

"We will be exploring opportunities to make the program available to other Yukon First Nations and Yukon government employees," said John Burdek, Assistant Deputy Minister with the Government of Yukon's Governance Liaison and Capacity Development Branch.

"We are also working toward being able to transfer participants' certificates to diploma and public administration degree programs," said Burdek.

"We are also working toward being able to transfer participants' certificates to diploma and public administration degree programs," said Burdek.

Shadelle Chambers, a CAFN staff member, citizen and student, says the program is definitely working.

"Our first course, a public administration course, taught us principles and theories we could see being used in our day-to-day work," said Chambers. "The course solidified the fact that we are a full government and the same public administration theories that work for large governments such as Canada also work for CAFN."



Executive Development Program students listening to a presentation on governance.

The first course, students begin with two days of intensive coursework in Haines Junction, Whitehorse followed by four to six weeks of tutorial sessions in which students work on assignments and activities with the aid of a community-based tutor and conclude with another two days of intensive coursework.

Students who complete the 10-course program will receive a one-year certificate. The courses are being delivered over three years to allow students to study while they continue to work for the First Nation.

"CAFN and Yukon College have provided flexibility to make this program work for everyone," said Chambers. "I don't have to pack up and move to get this education. I can keep my job."

"The education is relevant and practical as well as being widely applicable," continued Chambers. "Plus, it's great for people who have all levels of education, from high school graduates to PhDs."

We have an amazing set of instructors and guest lecturers we've been able to draw on. Many of them were instrumental in the ground-level formation of Yukon First Nations governance and can combine classroom theory with practical, relevant examples of our recent history.

CAFN Director of Education and program steering committee member

"A lot has happened in 14 years (since CAFN signed their Final Agreement) and it's neat to get people who have lots of experience combined with those who are brand new to our government," said Green. "We work hard to incorporate the learning philosophy that 'the knowledge is in the room' and these courses are a way to ensure that the knowledge gets transferred."

Although the Executive Development Program is still a work in progress, offering such a custom-made course provides numerous opportunities.

According to Rowles, "It's been an educational process for everyone involved."

For more information contact:

Kelli Taylor, Government of Yukon
867.456.6842
Suzanne Green, CAFN: 867.667.6098 or,
Jacqueline Bedard, Yukon College
867.456.8619

Looking Forward: The Tr'ondëk Hwéché'in Elders' Council

The Tr'ondëk Hwéché'in Elders' Council is a new organization that will guide the future of the community.

Supported by community members, the council will guide the future of the community in terms of vision and mission, and the council will be responsible for the future of the community.

Yukon First Nations Land Claim and Self-Government



1902
Hereditary Chief Jim Boss of the Ta'an Kwach'an appeals for help from King Edward VII after the Klondike Gold Rush led to the loss of land and game.

1973
The Yukon Native Brotherhood, representing status and non-status Indians, presents "Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow" to the federal government. It provides the basis for land claim negotiations in the Yukon Territory. The federal government announces a Comprehensive Land Claims Policy to guide the negotiation of Aboriginal claims in Canada following the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in the Calder Case.

The Council for Yukon Indians is formed by the Yukon Native Brotherhood and the Yukon Association for Non-status Indians to represent all Yukon First Nations and negotiate land claims on their behalf.

1979
The Government of Yukon joins the land claim and self-government negotiation process.

1982
The *Constitution Act, 1982* (Section 35) recognises and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights and those acquired by way of land claim agreements.

1984
The federal and territorial governments ratify an Agreement-in-Principle but it is rejected by the General Assembly of the Council for Yukon Indians. Land claim negotiations are suspended.

1990
Canada announces changes to its Comprehensive Claims Policy. This new policy addresses some of Yukon First Nations' key concerns.

1992
Negotiations with the Council for Yukon Indians resume.

1989
All parties ratify an Agreement-in-Principle, which forms the basis for the subsequent Umbrella Final Agreement.

1991
The Council for Yukon Indians, the Government of Yukon and the Government of Canada sign the Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement, which forms the basis and framework for subsequent negotiations of individual Yukon First Nation Final Agreements. These agreements are modern-day treaties.

1994
Enacting legislation, *Yukon First Nation Land Claim Settlement Act* and the *Yukon First Nation Self-Government Act*, is introduced in Parliament on May 31. It receives Royal Assent on July 7. Surface rights legislation receives Royal Assent on December 15.

1995
On February 14, the Yukon First Nation Final and Self-government Agreements for the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, the Teslin Tlingit Council and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation come into effect. On the same day, federal and territorial enacting legislation comes into effect.

Council for Yukon Indians becomes the Council of Yukon First Nations.

2006
A total of eleven Yukon First Nation Final and Self-government Agreements are in effect.

Through to 2008
Yukon Self-governing First Nations assume responsibility for federal programs and services in major areas including, governance, housing, health and social services, post-secondary education and northern affairs. Negotiations are on-going for the transfer of additional federal and territorial programs and services.

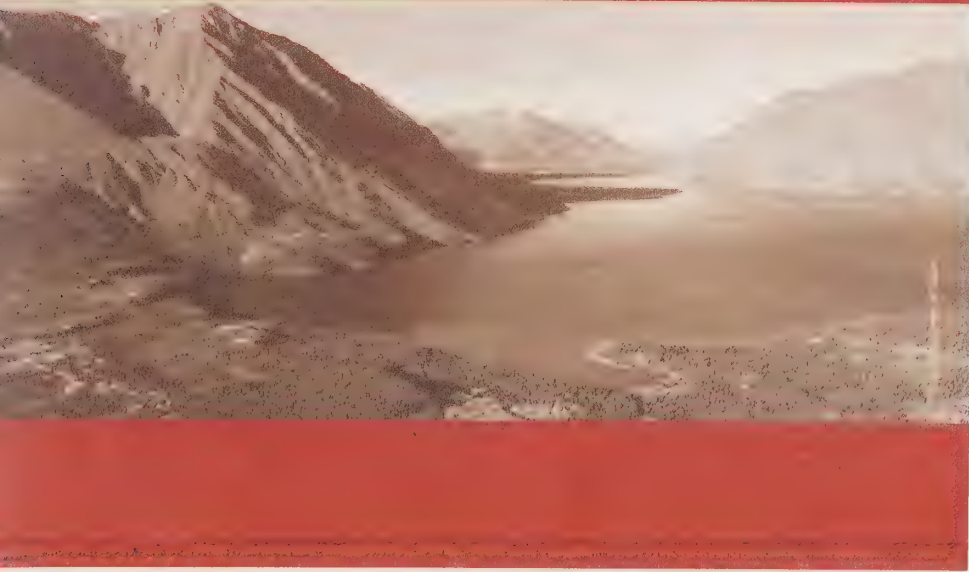


Yukon First Nations Land Claim and Self-Government

Eleven Yukon First Nations have signed and are implementing their Final and Self-Government Agreements. The first four agreements were signed in 1993 and became effective in 1995.



- Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, 1993 (Champagne)
- First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun, 1993 (Nacho)
- Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, 1993 (Gwitchin)
- Teslin Tlingit Council, 1993 (Teslin)
- Liard First Nation, 1993 (Liard)
- Liard First Nation, 1993 (Liard)
- Liard First Nation, 1993 (Liard)
- Liard First Nation, 1993 (Liard)
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"Now we can look forward and not look back," said Ronald Johnson, Chair of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Elders' Council.

"We have Elders who want to know what is happening with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Agreements and the Terms of Reference will open up the lines of communication," continued Johnson.

"The Terms of Reference are an important part of governance," said Chris Evans, Manager of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Elders and Youth Enhancement Programming.

"Essentially, the Elders' Council has been operating without a guiding document since the signing of the self-government agreement," continued Evans. "A lot of people have worked

hard to ensure that the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in line with the constitution and satisfies the Elders' wishes."

"I feel good about it," said Johnson. "Working with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in community."

"Ensuring the Terms of Reference do what the Elders want them to do means more hard work ahead," added Evans. "but we now have a guiding document that provides for effective and consistent communication as we move forward and focus on the document's implementation."

For more information contact:

Margaret Titus at 778-991-1100 or
margaret.titus@trondek.com



Management Boards and Committees Established Under the Umbrella Final Agreement

Chapter 12 of the Umbrella Final Agreement (UFA) sets out the framework for the establishment of Management Boards and Committees (MBCs) to manage Yukon lands. The MBCs are responsible for the day-to-day management of Yukon lands and for the implementation of the UFA. The MBCs are composed of representatives from the Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada.

The MBCs are responsible for the day-to-day management of Yukon lands and for the implementation of the UFA.

Yukon Stream Rights Board

Created under Chapter 12 of the UFA, the Yukon Stream Rights Board (YSRB) is responsible for the management of Yukon streams. The YSRB is composed of representatives from the Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada.

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Traditional Knowledge Board

The Traditional Knowledge Board (TKB) is responsible for the management of traditional knowledge. The TKB is composed of representatives from the Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada.

Guiding Policy Committee

The Guiding Policy Committee (GPC) is responsible for the management of Yukon lands. The GPC is composed of representatives from the Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada.

The GPC is responsible for the management of Yukon lands and for the implementation of the UFA. The GPC is composed of representatives from the Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada.

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Environmental Assessment Board

The Environmental Assessment Board (EAB) is responsible for the management of environmental assessment. The EAB is composed of representatives from the Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada.

Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board

The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board (YFWMB) is responsible for the management of Yukon fish and wildlife. The YFWMB is composed of representatives from the Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada.

The YFWMB is responsible for the management of Yukon fish and wildlife and for the implementation of the UFA. The YFWMB is composed of representatives from the Yukon First Nations, the Government of Yukon, and the Government of Canada.

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For more information contact:

Rob Yeomans at 867.668.6420 or rob.yeomans@yesab.ca



Left: A team of YESAB assessors tour Yukon Energy's hydro station this past fall to learn about the Yukon's electrical infrastructure. Right: Nathan Aasman, an Assessment Officer with YESAB, conducts a site visit at a solid waste management facility in Silver City – one of over 25 solid waste facilities being assessed by YESAB this past winter

Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act

The Act

Chapter 12 of the Umbrella Final Agreement represents the foundation of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act (YESAA) – the federal act that outlines the process of how environmental and socio-economic assessments are carried out on all Yukon lands

The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) – with Canada and the Government of Yukon – was one of the three Parties who crafted the legislation and their involvement helped define the unique roles that First Nations play under YESAA

YESAA establishes a process to identify the environmental and socio-economic effects of proposed developments before they are carried out and allows assessors to deal with any potential adverse affects before they occur

YESAA, in part, was created to protect, promote and where possible, enhance the well-being and traditional economies of Yukon First Nation persons and their special relationship with the land

If a project affects a First Nation or First Nation territory, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) notifies and seeks the views of the First Nation before any recommendation is made

In addition, there are specific procedures for the consideration and handling of confidential First Nations' traditional knowledge and opportunities for the incorporation of traditional knowledge into assessments

The Board

YESAB is an independent board that administers the assessment process. The Board is made up of seven members, including nominees of CYFN and the Government of Yukon who are then appointed by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada for three year terms.

The Process

Assessments are carried out as one of three levels depending on the type and size of activities associated with a proposed project

There are six assessment districts under YESAA with a Designated Office for each district and approximately 98 per cent of assessments are carried out at this level

Larger and more complex projects are carried out by the Executive Committee made up of the YESAB Chair and two Board Members

A third Panel level assessment also exists although has not been required to date

After considering all relevant information, a YESAB assessor will determine the potential environmental and socio-economic effects and make a recommendation to the Decision Body or Bodies

A Decision Body will then accept, reject or vary the recommendation and issue the required permit or authorization if applicable

All information associated with a project assessment can be viewed by the public via the YESAB Online Registry. In addition, anyone can contribute and participate in assessments by submitting information at specific stages in the process

Whether an access road, power line, forestry cut blocks or an open pit mine, Yukon residents have helped YESAB conduct over 700 project assessments

For more information contact:

Rob Yeomans at 867.668.6420 or rob.yeomans@yesab.ca

Visions North

TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS
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Government of Yukon – Communications
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This newsletter was produced through the efforts of many. A special thanks to the First Nations people and public service employees who provided information for the articles in this newsletter.

Contributors: Marilyn Jensen, Wayne Polmink, Barbara Johnson, Bob Yeomans, Trudy Taylor, Marie-Louise Boylan and Amanda Latta

Photographic courtesy of: Jim Williams (INAC), Broniek Huxford, Carmela Taylor, First Nations, Chongqing (Athabasca First Nations), Yukon College, Orville Smith (YK)

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TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS

Carmacks Greenhouse Blossoms

Not only is the Carmacks greenhouse the largest tourist attraction in Carmacks after the Tàgè Cho Hudan Interpretive Centre, it has also raised the town's community spirit.

It started in 2000 as Dawn Charlie was working in her garden at home in the small First Nation community. She began to think about what would happen if there was a catastrophe so severe that it threatened the North's food supply. Appreciating that her small town would not be a high priority in a large-scale emergency, an idea for a local food source started to germinate.

Almost a decade later, the root cellar she started has evolved into two greenhouses and a garden plot. At first, funding came from the Yukon government's Community Development Fund and Agriculture Canada. Then the community became so enthusiastic about what was happening that before long the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation permanently adopted the project.

Produce this year included potatoes, tomatoes, beans, corn, melons, peppers, peas, lettuce and cucumbers. All produce gets shared—part goes to community members in the Carmacks diabetes program, part goes to the First Nation for local events and part is sold farm-gate style to tourists and locals. The greenhouse has also given extra vegetables to the local school lunch program.

"All of our produce is what I like to call 'user-friendly' organic," said Charlie. She explained that even though the greenhouse has never used chemical pesticides or fertilizers, their food can't be certified organic because much of their composting material is donated from uncertified sources.

Greenhouse operators have also tried growing some unique items. One year, they planted a crop of Stevia, a somewhat-controversial South American plant that has extract 10 times sweeter than sugar and is often grown as a sugar substitute.

The experiment was initially successful. "The sugar content in the Carmacks



Pat Bill checks to see if a cucumber is ready to be picked

greenhouse plants was higher than that from plants produced by experts in Ontario," said Charlie. Much to her amusement, a Canadian company that specializes in the production and distribution of the sugary plant was so impressed with the greenhouse's success that they asked Charlie if she could provide training to other Stevia growers. Ultimately, the labour involved in the project proved to be too expensive to be practical.

Each year the greenhouse employs local students and social assistance recipients but, as in so many other parts of the territory, the greenhouse operation always needs enthusiastic volunteers.

Part of Charlie's vision for the future of the greenhouse depends on an increase in staff. She'd love to see enough vegetables produced so that some could be canned or frozen for winter sales. Year-round sales would help the greenhouse profits, as well as provide a permanent source of high-quality local food for the community.

Charlie would also love to see gardening projects catch on in more communities. "My dream is that every community in the North would have a greenhouse option.

It's so much healthier, so much more environmentally friendly," she said. "People from other Northern communities come here all the time to look and to learn. I tell them the key is to have a good composting program and to hire the right people to run the greenhouse – people with a passion."

Charlie's own passion is contagious. She's excited that the national media attention the greenhouse has received has sparked an interest in other communities, and she's equally excited about the enthusiasm of Carmacks residents. "We have people involved in so many ways. From the farmers who donate their grass clippings and manure for our compost, to the elders who enjoy the tasty fresh food, to the student employees who have planted gardens in their own yards, our greenhouse has touched everyone. There is way, way more gardening in Carmacks now."

Apparently the way to a community's heart is through its stomach. "It's the taste!" said Charlie. "It makes such a difference to have fresh, local food – food that's clean, healthy, and contributing to your community. Nothing tastes better."

For more information contact:
Dawn Charlie at (867) 863-5905 ☎

Part of the crew that helped make the greenhouse a success:
Alice Boland, Dawn Charlie, Chris Gull and Pat Bill (left to right)



WHAT IS VISIONS NORTH?

Visions North: talking about Yukon land claims is a bi-annual newsletter that raises awareness about land claims and self-government and related issues in Yukon communities.


Visions North is produced and distributed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) with the participation of the Government of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN).

WHAT IS CHIEF

Chief of the Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation, Dawn Charlie, is a passionate advocate for her community. She has led the community through several challenges, including the development of the Carmacks Greenhouse. Charlie is a strong leader and a dedicated member of her community. She has been instrumental in the development of the Carmacks Greenhouse, which has become a major tourist attraction and a source of pride for the community. Charlie is also involved in various other community activities and is a role model for many young people in the community.



Construction began in June 2008 next to the existing administration building. While cutting and preparing the beams took a few months, it took only one day to assemble the large pieces with the crane and bolt them in place. First Nations art will be added with future funding came from the CTFN Executive Council. The contractors, Dave Brook and Michael MacDonald, are residents on CTFN's traditional territory. The building will serve members of CTFN, the community at large and all Yukoners by providing a home for farmers' markets, outdoor concerts, and other social gatherings.

For more information contact:
Gavin Gardiner, (arcross/Tagish
First Nation at (867) 821-4251 or
gavin.gardiner@ctfn.ca. 



Old Crow's newest building resonates with echoes of the community's oldest history. The John Tizya Centre, which officially opened its doors on July 15, contains a collection of oral history recordings, local artifacts, and a map of place names constructed from years of research carried out with Vuntut Gwitchin elders.

As well as helping to preserve 'Old Crow's' history and educate new generations, the centre will be used for community events. It also has an upgraded editing suite for the production of local films and documentaries and a multimedia theatre for film screenings.



government's Tourism and Culture and Environment departments. Taking the needs of the community into account, the team kept the displays focused on education. Learning packages will be provided to schools to encourage them to visit the centre often. They designed the centre's displays on a smaller scale and created them to be portable so that the space inside the centre can be used for community events.

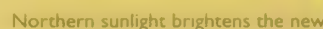
"We're also really excited to have a full-time interpreter at the building," added Williams. "The interpreter position is new and is funded by both the First Nation government and Parks Canada. Our interpreter will be able to focus on finding ways to creatively pass on the heritage and culture of our elders to younger generations and visitors alike. The elders have been very supportive of this work and have expressed so much appreciation for our focus on respectfully educating, primarily, our younger generation and, secondarily, all others who are interested."

angled the building to get the most out of the arctic sunlight. All unused power gets fed back into the Old Crow community power grid.

Comments in the centre's guest book show that visitors from Japan to Switzerland have all enjoyed the building and its exhibits "Awesome place!" a visitor from Prince Edward Island wrote. "Superb exhibit," wrote a visitor from France

However, the success of the centre can be measured by community members' reactions. Dorothy Frost, the building's interpreter and a community member said: "To me, it means having visitors understand the entire social culture and history of the Vuntut Gwitchin people, and why the Porcupine caribou herd is so important to the web of life we call home. These messages are strengthened by the wealth of information that has been collected, managed and preserved, and are to be shared as was taught to us by our elders."

For more information contact:
Megan Williams at (867) 966-3235.



Log Homes — Building a Yukon Tradition

With their first year of training complete, graduates from the Council of Yukon First Nation's Log Home Capacity Building project have secured jobs and are excited about their future prospects.

A total of 30 students, members of 11 Yukon First Nations, most of whom were young adults, participated in the log home building course that was offered in Dawson City, Haines Junction and Carcross. The students built seven log homes.

"The program has helped our members increase their skills and find jobs," said Justin Ferbey, Executive Director of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN). "Some of the graduates worked all summer building log homes for Carcross/Tagish First Nation citizens. CTFN has commissioned eight more log homes, so the students will be busy for some time to come."

Leahanna Dickson, of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation said the course really helped increase her self-confidence. "It was exciting for me to see that I could actually do it—build a log home from the ground up. The skills I



Learning to scribe (Carcross camp)



R-22 Crew (Dawson camp)

learned will help me in the future. I have real, marketable skills now that I can use to find work," Dickson said.

"I love to fish and hunt. I intend to spend more time out in the bush," said Blaine Peters from the First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun. "I'll be using the skills I learned from this course to build a cabin so I can stay in the bush even longer to trap, hunt and fish."

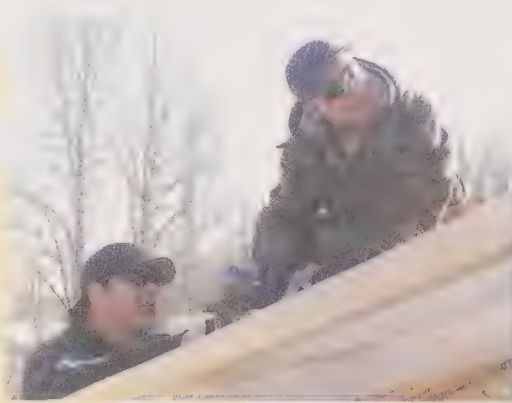
A group of individuals from the First Nation Forestry Management Committee designed the project, which was coordinated by the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN). The committee recognised the need to develop practical forestry skills through a course that was supported by all Yukon First Nation communities. With a tremendous amount of work, collaboration, coordination and some financial assistance from Canada, the eleven participating First Nations, the CYFN, the Yukon government, the First Nation Training Policy Committee and the First Nation Forestry Program, the project reached fruition.

"We wanted to provide students with enough knowledge, skills and confidence to venture into the log-home-building business," said Ann Marie Swan, one of the program coordinators. "This course will have a long-lasting, positive economic impact in Yukon communities. Our graduates are using their skills to develop economic opportunities and to work in related fields."

Three trainers were hired with over 20 years of experience each in log home building to

deliver the on-site skills mentorship course. The students worked six days a week and lived in camps for two months.

“We lived closely together, we learned a lot from each other and we learned a lot about ourselves,” said Robert Otterholm from the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in. “We left with real pride in our skills and our achievements. Most of us got jobs right away: I put my skills to work building a cook shack on the Dempster Highway. It was awesome!”



Almost there – Klukshu (Haines Junction camp)

In total, the first Log Home Capacity Building project generated 21 new full-time employment opportunities throughout the Yukon.

The project was initially approved for two years and it is expected to continue in 2008/2009.

For more information contact:

Ann Marie Swan at (867) 393-9236 or
annmarie.swan@cyfn.net.

New Country Residential Subdivision

In the true spirit of the North, the Ta'an Kwäch'än are treading uncharted territory in the Yukon with their vision of a new country residential subdivision north of Whitehorse. The C-23 development is no ordinary subdivision. The 27-lot residential area is poised to open up new sources of revenue and ownership options for the self-governing Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nation through a new-to-Yukon leasing option for potential residents.

Only 15 minutes from downtown Whitehorse, you'll find crews working on the development of the area, which is located on the North Klondike Highway across from Hidden Valley. With funding support from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Northern Strategy Trust Fund, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Development Corporation developed plans and carried out a business case and feasibility study.

What makes this project unique is the ownership of the land and lots. The premise is to create 27 new lots, where each lot will be leased, not sold. The residents will retain the lease for a specific number of years (yet to be determined), after which they will be given the option to renew.

The potential behind this innovative home-ownership option stems from tax-sharing arrangements available to all self-governing First Nations. The arrangement, which has been in place for over six years, means First Nation governments will receive a large share of the personal income tax of residents living on their settlement land.

Since the Tā an Kwāch'ān will retain ownership of the land that is being leased, the First Nation

is able to collect lease payments and income tax from the owners of the lots. This will bring in an estimated \$600,000 in revenue annually.

The business strategy of the Ta'an, the tax revenue opportunities, the prime location near an urban centre and the need for housing in Whitehorse, all add up to make a strong product.

Ta'an Kwäch'än Development Corporation CEO, George Gottschall, says there is already much interest in the area from prospective homeowners. Individuals seeking to make a home in the C-23 subdivision will benefit from affordable lease rates and the standards set for the types of homes that will be built. "It will be its own little community," said Gottschall. "There will be walking trails, playgrounds for kids, and it will be a safe place to live."

Citizens of the First Nation have already seen benefits from the development, since many



are working on the construction of the lots and access roads. "It was a requirement of the project to involve as many of the Ta'an Kwäch'än citizens as possible," Gottschall said. Following its completion, the administration of the subdivision will be handled by the Ta'an Kwäch'än Development Corporation.

In the longer term, the revenue generated from this venture will be re-invested into other economic development projects by the First Nation. Gottschall emphasized, "this is going to be one of many Ta'an projects in the not-too-distant future. We are currently involved in many negotiated joint ventures with other First Nations."

"This is a major project for the Ta'an. It's the first of its kind in the Yukon, and we'll learn a great deal from its planning and development," Gottschall said.

As a legacy, the First Nation's efforts in planning and developing the subdivision will provide a strategic model that other First Nations can use to implement similar projects. Funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada was provided to develop a business strategy template for this venture. Through the funding of the template, all Yukon First Nations can benefit from the findings of the C-23 development and apply them to their own similar projects.

With this project well underway and with the prospect of lots hitting the market as early as next summer, the Ta'an Kwäch'än are focused on the future. With planned developments in Porter Creek, the experience gained from this unique northern venture will enhance future projects the Ta'an Kwäch'än undertake to strengthen their long-term sustainable economic growth.

For more information contact:

George Gottschall at (865) 335-2510 or
ggottschall@taan.ca.

A photograph of two women standing behind a booth for Vuntut. The booth has a large white banner at the top with the word "VUNTUT" in green, stylized letters. The women are wearing dark sleeveless shirts and have name tags. They are surrounded by various informational materials, including brochures and small displays on the booth walls.

For more information contact:
Stanlev Noel at 867-668-3908 or
snoel@yidc.ca or
www.foundationsconference.ca

Left: Danojà Zho cultural centre, Dawson City

visions north

TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS

Revitalising a Carving Tradition

Creating a healthy community does not simply mean preventing disease. A healthy community is a group of people with a strong sense of pride in their culture and each other.

The Carcross/Tagish First Nation (CTFN) Carver Training Program hopes to build community health by reinforcing a strong connection to Carcross Tagish culture among CTFN members.

“This is about revitalising a culture,” says Justin Ferbey, senior government official of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. “It is about allowing local artists to make a living with their art, and it is about providing a healthy social space where people can congregate and engage in our traditions.”

With funding from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), CTFN’s carver training program brings together master carver Keith Wolf-Smarch and six carvers who are members of CTFN. The group is exploring and studying their traditional art by carving a series of Inland Tlingit totem poles that depicts a creation story, beginning with one totem pole each for the wolf and crow moieties, or kinship groups.

Once the wolf and crow are completed the program may continue to carve poles for each of the six clans within the two moieties.

“It’s a celebration of culture really, with a healthy influence from Keith Smarch, who is modeling behaviours and traditions consistent with our virtues and values regarding the proper treatment of the wood. The elders blessed the wood and made the first cut,” explains Ferbey.

The program is expected to continue in the summer, with the construction of a carving shed in downtown Carcross.

For more information contact:
Carcross/Tagish First Nation at
(867) 821-4251 •

“This is about revitalising a culture. It is about allowing local artists to make a living with their art and, it is about providing a healthy social space where people can congregate and engage in our traditions.”

JUSTIN FERBEY, SENIOR GOVERNMENT
OFFICIAL OF THE CARCROSS/TAGISH
FIRST NATION

Studying Northern Food Security

For northern communities such as Old Crow, climate change brings up two main questions: how a warming climate will affect food security, and how to adapt to environmental changes. To ensure their communities are ready for potential changes to food supplies, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Teslin Tlingit Council are working with professor Dr. Laurie Chan from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) to discover how climate change could affect their food security.

The study, *Adaptation Strategies to Effects of Climate Change and Impacts on Diet and Health*, is funded through the International Polar Year Committee and conducted in cooperation with Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), University of Northern British Columbia, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Teslin Tlingit Council. The scientists have conducted interviews and analyses in Old Crow throughout 2007, and will begin research work in Teslin this spring.

“People here are concerned about changes to our food supply because of climate change and getting prepared for what might come is a big part of this research project,” said Shel Graupe, Natural Resources Director for the Vuntut Gwitchin government. “We’re happy to be partners in a study that addresses some of our community’s biggest concerns,” he added.

In the first part of the study, three scientists spent time in Old Crow assessing the Traditional Knowledge Archives for stories of past adaptation strategies, and conducted focus groups to hear from Elders and community members about adaptive strategies that have been passed on orally. They also followed up on a 1995 food frequency study, conducting a small-scale dietary survey. The involvement of Vuntut Gwitchin membership was essential to the success of the project.

“Community participation is crucial in Northern research and it is always a pleasure to work with communities in the Yukon because they are empowered and willing to do research, so it’s a research partnership,” said Dr. Laurie Chan, Leadership Chair of the UNBC Community Health Sciences Program.

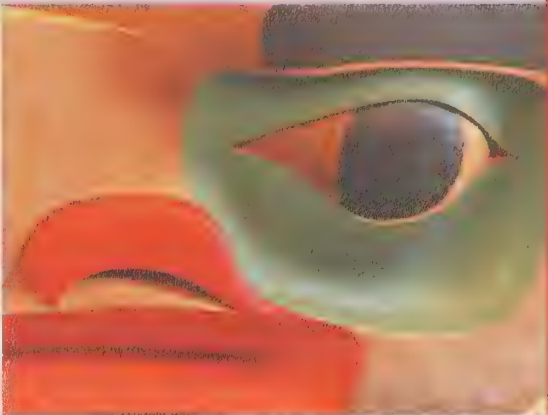
As well as recording information from the people of Old Crow, the researchers used information from wildlife ecologists to gain an understanding of changes to animal populations in the area.

“We hope that we will have a better understanding of the potential impact of bio-quality on the people and then work with the community to come up with a plan. Say there are fewer caribou, can the people eat more moose? Or if some fish species are not so available what are the other sources of protein and mineral nutrients?” said Chan.

The results of the first part of the study will be reported soon to the community of Old Crow.

For more information contact: Shel Graupe
at Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation (VGFN).
(867) 966-3213 •

Researchers in Old Crow (L to R) Jennifer Lee, Lands
Manager for VGFN; Pam Tobin, Field Research Manager,
UNBC; Sonia Wesche, Postdoctoral Fellow, UNBC



Carcross/Tagish First Nation carvings

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- Revitalising a Carving Tradition
- Studying Northern Food Security
- Health Impacts at the Council of Yukon First Nations
- Regional Longitudinal Health Study
- Measuring to Promote Community Health
- Women Connecting for Wellness
- Winter Gwitchin Student Welcomes Funding for Medical School
- Health Programs Transferred to Self-Governing First Nations

WHAT IS VISIONS NORTH?

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Canada

Health Initiatives at the Council of Yukon First Nations

The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) Health and Social Development Department works to improve the health and well-being of Yukon First Nations people. Initiatives range from community health care programs to advocacy, disease prevention, research, and community education. The department also addresses issues such as tobacco, mental health, and chronic disease. The department works with the Yukon First Nations communities to improve the delivery of health services and programs. The department also works with the Government of Yukon and the Government of Canada for the Health and Social Development Department.

The Health and Social Development Department is a committee of community health and social service directors and Elders. It comes

out every two months. It is made up of community health and social service directors and Elders.

The Health and Social Development Department is undertaking a number of initiatives: it is planning its involvement in the regional longitudinal health survey (see story below), it has established a working group to assess the feasibility of a Yukon First Nations Health and Wellness Centre; and it is currently working on involvement with the national Aboriginal Health Transition Fund to improve integration activities for First Nation citizens in our health care system. I will name but a few of its current activities.

For further information contact: The Health and Social Development Department at (867) 393-9213.



The Training Policy Committee (TPC) works to assist First Nations to reach their training goals, disburse funds for training Yukon First Nation beneficiaries and is accountable for monitoring and evaluating the value of that training. TPC administers the Yukon Indian People Training Trust Fund negotiated under Chapter 28 of the Umbrella Final Agreement.

The committee comprises five members: three represent the Council of Yukon First Nations, one represents the Government of Yukon and one represents the Government of Canada.

The TPC mandate can be found in Chapter 28 of the Umbrella Final Agreement.

If you have any questions or require forms or assistance with applying for funding, the TPC office staff would be happy to help you. Please call the office at (867) 668-7812 or email at tpc@cyfn.ca Suite 21 - 4078 Fourth Avenue (corner of 4th & Hanson St.) in Whitehorse.



Health Commissioners en route to meetings at Moosehide (June 2007)

Regional Longitudinal Health Study

Ownership, control, access and possession are the principles that underlie the Regional Longitudinal Health Survey, a project run by the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and funded through Health Canada. The project is the first of its kind – a national health survey performed totally under the jurisdiction of First Nations.

Through 2001 and 2003, nine Yukon First Nations communities volunteered to participate in the study and have been involved in every aspect of the survey since it began in the Yukon.

The next phase of the Regional Health Survey is planned for 2007, and CYFN hopes to have all Yukon First Nations participate.

At the end of the survey, ownership of the research process will return to the communities and First Nations values and interpretation will be incorporated into the research and design.

The data collected in the survey will be used by CYFN's Health and Social Development Commission and the communities that participated in the survey, for health planning and program development at all levels: local, regional, and national. The findings can also be used as a tool in each community to assess and monitor ongoing health status.

For more information contact: The Health and Social Development Department, CYFN (867) 393-9213.



Regional Health Survey Training Group's Group Photo (August 2007). Helen Inupiat (dark front left wearing a blue shirt) is one of the nine Yukon First Nations on the shore of the Yukon River. (Helen Inupiat front right) is the other representative.

Networking to Promote Community Health

The phones are ringing off the hook at the Arctic Health Research Network-Yukon (AHRN-YT) office in Horwood's Mall in Whitehorse. As they take turns answering calls, Jody Walker and Norma Kassi, co-directors of the AHRN-YT, take a moment to explain the goals of the non-profit society, which was established in February 2007.

"There is a gap between communities with pressing health issues that research could help improve, and researchers in the South who have expertise and training that could contribute to improving the situation," says Walker. "What is challenging is to create these connections. Many communities lack the capacity to take part meaningfully in community-based research. The ARHN-YT has a focus on regional capacity-building to facilitate the development of community-based research," she continues.

In community-driven research, communities are recognised as experts on their own health, and need to be part of every stage of the research process. For communities to be involved it is necessary to build capacity, which is why



Norma Kassi (left) and Jody Walker, co-directors of Arctic Health Research Network – Yukon overlooking Old Crow Flats.

ARHN-YT is working to offer training in health research planning for community members.

"The results of research need to answer questions from communities, which is different than curiosity-driven research initiated by academics," says Walker.

In 2007, ARHN-YT co-hosted a "Spring School" where 23 Yukon First Nations health resource workers travelled to Whitehorse to learn about health promotion planning in their communities.

The course was developed and implemented at the request of, and with guidance from, the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) Health and Social Development Commission, and in partnership between CYFN, ARHN-YT, Yukon College and the University of Toronto. Funding came from a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) grant to Dr. Kue Young, and from the Yukon government Department of Health and Social Services.

"To follow up with the recommendations from the first training, ARHN-YT has partnered with CYFN, Yukon College, the University of Toronto, the University of Manitoba and others to put together a proposal to develop and deliver two training courses a year for the next three years," said Walker. "We have submitted that proposal to the International Polar Year Committee, and we anticipate finding out about funding sometime in the spring," she added.

The ARHN-YT is taking a long-term approach to training so that potential future courses can build on results from previous instruction.

After each training session, participants will take the knowledge they have gathered and use it in ways that make sense for developing health



Arctic Health Research Network - Yukon

research capacity in their home communities. At the same time, the ARHN-YT will continue to facilitate the development of partnerships between interested Yukon communities and researchers from outside the Yukon.

The Whitehorse office of the Arctic Health Research Network is one of three across the North, and will help to coordinate information and community research efforts with the AHRN offices in NWT and Nunavut.

The ARHN will also promote best practices in relation to community-based research, for instance, respecting local research protocols and upholding the principles of ownership, control, access and possession. It will act as a link between health and wellness research activities, and seek opportunities for educational and funding partnerships in health research in the North with a focus on Aboriginal health.

For further information contact: the Arctic Health Research Network-Yukon at (867) 668-3393.

Women Connecting for Wellness

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Yukon governments, together with the Dawson City women's group, are cooperating to hold a wellness retreat for Yukon women this spring.

The workshop will be held on traditional Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in land south of Dawson on the Dempster Highway.

Jennifer Nunan, a pre-treatment and aftercare support worker with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, says the retreat will lessen social isolation among higher-risk Yukon women by connecting them with other women who share common experiences. The retreat will also give them information on issues that impact their lives.

"The wellness of Yukon women is a cornerstone for the health of our children, families and communities," Nunan said. "Research tells us that healthy relationships are central to a woman's well-being, yet so many Yukon women live in

isolation and are missing those connections which are so important to good health."

The retreat will build connections for women who face adversity and who work hard to maintain their sobriety and their self-esteem.

"During the retreat we will be drawing on the expertise of local people, and people from around the Yukon, to present workshops on topics such as healthy relationships, assertive communication, substance abuse, violence, parenting skills, nutrition, physical fitness and body image," Nunan said.

Mo Caley-Verdonk, a community Victim Services Worker based in Dawson, says some of the women who will participate in the retreat have experienced abuse in their relationships and are struggling with addictions along with learning new and different ways to live healthier lives.

"This project is seen as a terrific opportunity to reinforce the positive attributes they possess while building their capacity to make healthier choices," Caley-Verdonk said.

The Dawson City women's group is taking the lead on developing programming for the workshop.

Nunan said the retreat also presents an opportunity for community development. "For example, local women will be building their investment in women's health and well-being as they take the lead in hosting the retreat and organising activities for the three days," she said.

The wellness retreat is funded in part by a contribution from the Yukon government's Community Development Fund. The wellness retreat is planned for May 19 – 23, 2008.

For more information: Please contact the Government of Yukon at (867) 667-5406.

"The wellness of Yukon women is a cornerstone for the health of our children, families and communities. Research tells us that healthy relationships are central to a woman's well-being, yet so many Yukon women live in isolation and are missing those connections which are so important to good health."

JENNIFER NUNAN, PRE-TREATMENT AND AFTERCARE SUPPORT WORKER WITH THE TR'ONDEK HWECH'IN



Retreat area on the Dempster Highway

Vuntut Gwitchin Student Receives Funding for Medical School

Dr. Jones hopes that a number of aspects of medicine that are ignored for medical profession and at positive experience of her medical studies has sparked her interest in encouraging others to pursue a similar path.

"One of the amazing privilege of being involved in peoples' lives: you can continue to learn throughout your career and pursue research and learn. You were intimately within the community that you choose to practice in and get to know about contributing to peoples' lives," Kelly said.

The program helped me in bursary has been a big help to me in covering the cost of tuition. He said, "It's allowing me to concentrate on studying and learning without having to be constantly worried about how I was going to cover my living and studying costs while I try in medical school."

Immunobred doctor-in-training says she will be the smallest in the Yukon to work. She hopes to contribute to First Nations communities in whatever capacity she can.

For more information contact: Health and
 the Environment (800) 467-5973 •



A. Kelly with students from Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, October 2007.

Health Programs Transferred to Self-Governing First Nations

Yukon First Nation self-government agreements give First Nations power to negotiate the transfer of programs and services from the governments of Yukon or Canada in areas where they have jurisdiction, such as the provision of health care to their citizens.

The process to transfer programs and services is outlined in section 17 of each Yukon First Nation's self-government agreement. The process results in what is called a programs and services transfer agreement or PSTA.

Once a Yukon self-governing First Nation assumes the responsibility for a federal or territorial government program it has full and complete authority to manage, administer, design, deliver and set its priorities for the program according to its citizens' needs.

For more information contact: **John Cavale** at (667) 393-6005



Porcupine River, Old Crow

Visions North

For information or to share your feedback:

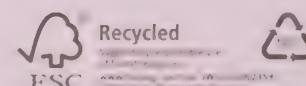
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Contributors: Meagan Perry, Amanda Mudry, Beth Thompson, Robert LaMarthian, Justin Herbey, *et al.*

Photographs courtesy of: Government of Yukon, Old Carcross/Tagish First Nation, Justin Ferbey, Amanda M.



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TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS



Jessica Trotter

Profile: Jessica Trotter

Jessica Trotter is the 15 year-old captain of the Yukon's women's hockey team that competed in the 2007 Canada Winter Games.

From the age of seven on, she devoted herself to learning the game and eight years after first picking up a hockey stick, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations member was playing center in the Canada Winter Games.

"I'm very proud to be the captain of the women's Canada Games team," she said. "I know there were a lot of other women that wanted it."

Throughout her hockey career, Trotter has been making the trek from her home in Haines Junction to Whitehorse at least twice a week.

In the year leading up to the Games, her travel time increased; she motored into the capital city five times each week, often doing her homework by flashlight on the way.

The Canada Games team was not the first high-profile team for which Trotter has applied her skills. At 13, she made the cut to play for the B.C. National Aboriginal Championship team and in the process became its youngest member.

She has never looked back. Since then her work on the ice has made her a familiar figure in her hometown, and the rest of the Yukon.

She says that the game of hockey has taught her important life skills, such as how to handle leadership, and how to be part of a team. It has

"The more we spend on our youth, the more we can develop capacity and add to the strength of our government."

CHAMPAGNE AND AISHIHIK
CHIEF DIANE STRAND

also made her a role model. In fact, Trotter will be featured in the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations newsletter this year. The First Nation has designated 2007 as the *Year of Our Youth* and will carry out a wide variety of youth initiatives and activities through its health and social programs, which fall under Chapter 24 of the Umbrella Final Agreement.

"The more we spend on our youth, the more we can develop capacity and add to the strength of our government," said Champagne and Aishihik Chief Diane Strand.

Finding out more about land claims is one of Trotter's future goals.

"I would like to learn more about it. There's so much to learn about the land, and I'd love to know more."

For now, Trotter is concentrating on her game.

"I hope I have a good presence on the ice – passing the puck and working together," she said, commenting that she enjoys being known for her hockey playing.

"I love the way old-timer players in Haines Junction recognize me as a hockey player."

Trotter is still a young player, but her time at the rink has already given her a bundle of great memories. She met the coach of the Olympic hockey team, Melody Davidson, at a hockey camp last summer. That was a highlight, but the list of great memories goes on.

"My best moment in hockey was trying out and making it on the B.C. National Aboriginal Hockey Championship team in 2005," she said. "Then I made it onto the 2006 team too. I loved travelling to B.C. to learn more from other players and to tell young Aboriginal people about Haines Junction and the Yukon."

"On the native hockey team I think I'm recognized as a Champagne and Aishihik First Nations member, and that's pretty important to me."

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Profile: Jessica Trotter

2007 Whitehorse Canada Winter Games

Gathering Of Nations: Nations Aboriginal Traditions & Cultural Expo

Winning Together: First Nations Made in Yukon Forest Industry

What's Gonna Happen?



The world's top parkour athletes who performed stunts at the 2007 Canada Winter Games.

WHAT IS VISIONS NORTH?

Visions North is a magazine about Yukon and Canada's financial and social issues that raises awareness about land and forest and will government agreements and development in the Yukon First Nations and non-First Nations communities.

Visions North is published and produced by Yukon and Northern Affairs Canada. It is a joint publication of the governments of Yukon and the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN).

Canada

2007 Whitehorse Canada



Spiritual traditions performed at Southern Tleil-wet

Yukon Government Photo



©2007 Yukon Government Photo



Traditional dance from across the North performed at Whitehorse

Traditional games were demonstration sports at the Canada Winter Games



Yukon Government Photo



Winter Games



Gathering Of Northern Nations Aboriginal Tradeshow and Cultural Expo

The mandate of the Yukon First Nations Tourism Association is to promote the development, improvement and growth of tourism, and business and cultural activities and interests of Yukon First Nation people. With this goal in mind, the association organized an event at the 2007 Canada Winter Games that showcased the talents and expertise of Northern indigenous peoples. It was the Gathering of Northern Nations Aboriginal Tradeshow & Cultural Expo.

The association invited indigenous people from across the North to participate in the event. From February 28 to March 4, aboriginal performers, visual artists, tourism and business operators, artisans, and community members from all over the North came together in Whitehorse.

"This gathering of Aboriginal cultures and businesses demonstrated convergence at its best, highlighting Aboriginal talent from across the North Old and young, professional and just starting out," said Meta Williams, the executive director of the Yukon First Nations Tourism Association.

Aboriginal people from the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut kicked off the games at a gala for the Game's opening reception. Performers took to the mainstage, and artisan's products were displayed at the Tradeshow and Artist Market, while cultural demonstrations and activities were held in their own area at the expo. There was also an informal gathering area where participants could exchange and expand on ideas, share stories and knowledge, and their culture. Exhibitors and artists from the territories provided a broad variety of cultural activities and products, creating an exciting place for cultural learning.



Aboriginal tools were on display at the Gathering of Northern Nations.

"This event provided a place for key stakeholders to gather with Aboriginal Elders, tourism and business operators, artists, craftspeople, traditionalists, academics, youth, and other representatives," Williams added. "The Gathering was to promote our communities' best and we hope it also provided opportunities for networking, dialogue exchange and sharing of best practices. An added bonus was to also promote First Nation communities, Aboriginal tourism, and tourism as a whole."

For more information on this event, contact 867-667-7698 or email admin@yfnta.org.

Working Together for a "Made-in-Yukon" Forest Industry

Residents of the North are witnessing continued and progressive development of forestry in Yukon with the development of Strategic Forest Management Plans for the traditional territories of the Champagne and Aishihik, and the Teslin Tlingit First Nations.

Strategic Forest Management Plans define how Yukon forests will be used by industry and other users. The plans generally identify how the forest's resources can be used in a sustainable and culturally acceptable manner.

The plans are developed in accordance with Chapter 17, Forest Resources, of the First Nation Final Agreements.

First Nations and the Yukon government jointly approved the Strategic Forest Management plan for the Teslin Tlingit traditional territory in October 2006. The plan for the Champagne and Aishihik traditional territory was approved in December 2004.

Recommendations regarding forest use can be found in each strategic plan. The completed plans for these two regions carefully consider the potential impacts of timber harvesting on other forest-based activities such as trapping, hunting, recreation, cultural activities, along with historical and archeological values, wildlife habitat, water quality and commercial tourism.

"We have been fortunate that our governments and community are able to engage in a process that allows us all to have a voice in how we look after our resources," said Rose Kushniruk, who was chair of the Alsek Renewable Resource Council during the development of the Champagne Aishihik Strategic Forest



Champagne Aishihik forest.

Management Plan. "This partnership has given us an opportunity to learn from each other. It enables us to educate our community and, most importantly, respect and incorporate a wide range of views."

By undertaking planning at the community level, groups of local residents learned more about the forest industry, including how it should be allowed to develop, where and how timber harvesting can occur, and how much timber should be harvested over what period of time and under what conditions.

The comprehensive result of this planning-in-partnership initiative also creates significant potential for the development of regional small-scale forest industries that can be expected to provide local jobs and contribute to an ever-growing and diversified Yukon economy.

For more information contact Gary Miltenberger, director of the Yukon Forest Management branch at 867-456-3838 or gary.miltenberger@gov.yk.ca.

"This partnership has given us an opportunity to learn from each other. It enables us to educate our community and, most importantly, respect and incorporate a wide range of views."

PAST CHAIR OF THE ALSEK RENEWABLE RESOURCE COUNCIL
ROSE KUSHNIRUK

Who is Gavin Fitch?

Gavin Fitch is a lawyer with the law firm of Fitch, Fitch & Fitch, located in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Mr. Fitch has been a member of the Yukon Renewable Resource Council since its inception in 1998. He has also been a member of the Yukon Renewable Resource Council since its inception in 1998.

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"I am happy to be a part of this positive step," said Fitch. "It is good to be moving along the road to clarity about the resolution of land claims issues across Canada."

GAVIN FITCH

Visions North

Visions North is a publication that provides information about the Yukon and its people. It is a publication that provides information about the Yukon and its people. It is a publication that provides information about the Yukon and its people.

For more information, please contact the following:

INAC – Communications

1-800-960-9898 or www.inac.gc.ca

CYFN – Communications

1-800-960-9898 or www.cyfn.gc.ca

Government of Yukon – Communications

1-800-960-9898 or www.gov.yk.ca

For more information, please contact the following:

Contributors: Robin Armour, Brenda Aspinall, Peter Patch, Groenewegen, Peter Lesniak, Gary Miltenberger, Meagan Perry, Diane Strand, Jessica Trotter.

Photographs courtesy of: Government of Yukon, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, John Trotter.

For more information, please contact the following:

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TALKING ABOUT YUKON LAND CLAIMS

Your Knowledge

Yukon Land Claims 101

BY SARAH LOCKE

"The land claim and self-government agreements do affect how people live up here. A lot of issues are not abstract, they are things that people are dealing with."

FLOYD MCCORMICK

Even Yukoners who have lived in the territory all their lives can find the land claims process hard to follow. The decades of negotiations can dissolve into a blur of technical terms, acronyms and confusing details. Additionally, insights into the process can be hard to find.

Taking the land claims course at Yukon College is one way for people to piece together the big picture on this subject. *"Introduction to Land Claims and Self-Government of Yukon First Nations"* is geared to give students an understanding of key aspects of the process, such as the *Umbrella Final Agreement* and Yukon First Nations' final and self-government agreements.

The course also covers the historical development of land claims in Canada and the Yukon and issues such as self-government and aboriginal title. Floyd McCormick, the course instructor, reassures that learning about land claims is far more than an academic exercise.

"The land claim and self-government agreements do affect how people live up here. A lot of issues are not abstract, they are things that people are dealing with," he says.

McCormick adds the course evolves yearly, reflecting the changing state of land claim issues. "It is not one of those courses where you can offer the same material every year, because something new is always coming up," he explains.

A recent class is a case in point. The first hour was spent discussing the federal election campaign and the parties' stands on land claims issues. In other classes, the discussion has centered on the lobster-fishing dispute at Burnt Church or key Supreme Court decisions on aboriginal issues.



Elder Emma Shorty and Elder Joe Johnson attend a classroom discussion at the Higher Education Conference in November 2000 at Yukon College.

Students also share their own life experiences in class. A lecture on land issues brought to light one student's attempt to buy land when a land freeze had been proposed in the Yukon. Another lecture on aboriginal rights had personal significance for a student whose mother had to regain her aboriginal status.

Joan Viksten says she understood a lot more on attending a Kwanlin Dun General Assembly because of what she has learned in the course and ended up explaining background points to other people as well. "The information is all pretty interesting and stimulating, and just a good thing to know," she says.

Viksten is a member of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation, but the majority of students who take the course are not of aboriginal descent. Some of them want to know more about land claims for work-related reasons. All seem to agree that knowing about land

claims and self-government is important for anyone living in the Yukon.

For many, the value of what they have learned becomes even clearer when they are out in the working world. Tammy Johnston took the course several years ago because it was required for her diploma in business administration. Now she is working for an accounting firm that has many First Nation clients.

"When I am working with them, I understand where they are coming from and what they are talking about," says Johnston. Besides understanding the ins and outs of financial arrangements such as federal transfer payments, she also feels she has more insight into her clients' concerns.

"The course is relevant to anyone who works with First Nations as it gives you a different perspective. It gives you a whole new outlook on where the First Nations are coming from and where they are headed." ●

Tribute

The tributes to the late Pierre Elliott Trudeau reminded northerners of his historic role in the Yukon land claims process. The former Prime Minister is shown with the late Kwanlin Dun First Nation Chief and founding chairperson of the Council of Yukon Indians Elijah Smith in 1973. Smith journeyed to Ottawa in 1973 to make Yukon First Nations' proposal *Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow* known to the Prime Minister. The document was a first step on the road to self-government.

First Nation/Community Profile

Life After Land Claims: Carmacks' success story

BY GRAHAM MCDONALD

Carmacks is a quiet village on the Klondike Highway, 175 km north of Whitehorse. To most eyes, it has looked much the same over the years. From the highway, one might notice the disappearance of the Sunset Motel and Sunrise Service Center and the construction of a new recreation complex.

Most people work in sales and services and trades and transport—many seasonally. In 1996, at the time of the last census, only 31 percent of workers could claim full-time, year-round work. A significant number of residents are employees of the Yukon, First Nation or municipal governments. The summer, with its road and river tourists, is the busy season.

The village population has fallen slightly

from a peak of 470 in the mid 1990s to about 440 these days. About two-thirds of the population is made up of Northern Tutchone people of the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation (LSCFN).

For years, former Chief Roddy Blackjack encouraged non-native and First Nation people to walk into the future side by side. That is the way Carmacks seems to work today.

Luke Lacasse, Mayor of Carmacks, notes the village council has been holding joint meetings with the LSCFN Chief and Council since 1985. "We always go along together on small things," he says.

For example, the village routinely contracts the First Nation's Carmacks Development Corporation to plough its streets. The two councils are also currently working

towards a joint decision on a new sewage treatment system for their community.

From his perspective, the mayor says not much has changed with the signing of the land claims agreement—except that everyone is clear on who owns what.

For people in the First Nation administration offices however, things have been very different since their land claims and self-government agreements were signed in July 1997. For the last three years, they've been working hard to take responsibility for their future.

Viola Mullett, Executive Director of Implementation for the First Nation, says the *Indian Act* is a thing of the past and the First Nation is now free to set its own priorities for programming. "We can invest in things that

are really needed in the community—rather than in what someone else thought was good for us."

The First Nation has taken on most programming previously managed by Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada. Program and Service Transfer Agreements (PSTAs) currently being negotiated with both public governments will be adding more government services like aboriginal languages and post-secondary education to LSCFN's authority.

The First Nation is also examining public school education. Chief Eddie Skookum says people are not sure students are learning what they need to succeed. For that reason, the First Nation has commissioned a report on education in the community.

Tax Monies: Opening Doors to Self-Government

BY PAUL KISHCHUK

On January 1, 1999 the Yukon's seven self-governing First Nations made Canadian fiscal history when they began to levy personal income taxes. At that time, the Yukon became the only place in Canada where not just two but three governments shared revenues from personal income taxes.

A key feature of any government is the ability to raise its own revenues. The entry of Yukon First Nation governments into the personal income tax field means they have taken a major step towards self-governance. This is because they can access revenues with no strings attached when deciding on how to spend the money.

Under the new arrangements, the Yukon First Nation personal income tax is equivalent to 95 percent of the territorial tax and 75 percent of federal income tax (the latter will change to 95 percent after 10 years).



Approximate Shares of Personal Income Tax Revenue Generated by Residents of Settlement Land (1999) (Share of Tax Revenue in percent)

When people living on settlement land pay personal income tax to a First Nation, they receive an equivalent credit against the amounts of federal and territorial income tax they owe. As a result, the overall tax burden of individual residents on settlement land has not increased. To date, the seven Yukon First Nation governments who levy a personal income tax on residents of their settlement lands have received almost \$1.3 million for 1999 and, subject to final adjustments, will receive a total of approximately \$2 million.

Under their self-government agreements, Yukon First Nation governments are able to pass laws regarding taxation of property and levy other forms of direct taxation including income and sales taxes. Since tax powers in Canada are land based, taxes charged by First Nation governments must be connected to settlement land. For example, in the case of personal income tax, Yukon First Nation governments may only collect taxes from individuals who live on settlement land.

During 1998, a series of tax-sharing and tax-collection agreements were negotiated between the governments of Canada, the Yukon and the seven self-governing First Nations. The coordinated method of tax-sharing spelled out in the agreements

means people living on settlement land need to file only one tax return. This is because Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (formerly Revenue Canada) collects personal income tax for all three governments. The tax-sharing agreements also ensure the rate of income tax charged to individual taxpayers is the same no matter where they live in the Yukon.

Individuals filing a Yukon tax return for the 1999 tax year will have noticed several changes to the Yukon tax forms. The changes begin on page one of the T1 general tax return with the addition of a "Yukon First Nation information" box appearing right below the identification section. The information box asks if they lived on settlement land of a self-governing Yukon First Nation on December 31, 1999 and if so, to indicate which First Nation by name and identification number. By completing the "Yukon First Nation information" box, individuals are signaling that a portion of their tax is to be diverted away from Canada and the Yukon's tax programs and into one of the seven self-governing Yukon First Nations' tax programs.

The long-term personal income tax sharing agreements existing between the three levels of government will provide a stable source of revenue for self-governing Yukon First Nations. Look for the "Yukon First Nation information" box when filing the 2000 tax return and know that it is a uniquely Yukon piece of Canadian fiscal history. ☉



Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation Chief Eddie Skookum holding his First Nation's Final and Self-Government Agreements at the official signing ceremony held in Carmacks on July 21, 1997.

Carmacks: Independent and Proud

continued from page 1...

The report's findings will help the First Nation to decide if it should take the education powers that it has negotiated in its self-government agreement.

To help finance programs, LSCFN members now pay income tax. The *Income Tax Act* passed by the First Nation means that 75 percent of federal income tax collected from individuals living on settlement land now flows directly to the First Nation. This will increase to 95 percent after 10 years. As well, 95 percent of the territorial income tax collected from individuals living on settlement lands, now flows directly to the First Nation. These funds help finance the development and delivery of programs. Tax payers have a stake and want to know how this money is being used.

"It's a slow and painful process to build

policies that ensure accountability," Mullett says. "But when mistakes are made, it's clear we have to account for the decisions." A full day of the last general assembly was spent discussing the annual audit. "Good, tough questions were asked," she adds.

Building an effective administration and the capacity to take on new responsibilities is important to the First Nation but recruiting for some positions has been difficult. Most current managers are in their 40s and 50s so special efforts are being made to train younger people. "We're trying to work with young people and open doors wherever we can," says Mullett.

Some people who have completed office administration training through a previous First Nation program are now pursuing further education. More than 10 members of the First

"We can invest in things that are really needed in the community – rather than in what someone else thought was good for us."

VIOLA MULLETT

Nation currently receive top-up funding to cover living expenses while they pursue post-secondary education. Students are enrolled in a diversity of programs such as business administration, the Yukon Native Teachers' education program and journalism.

"There is a greater sense of pride, now that we are self-governing," Mullett says. The First Nation is also working to address existing social problems. The First Nation leadership wants to promote healing and develop self-esteem for its people. A focus on traditional culture is considered important in these efforts and is one reason the First Nation built an interpretive center several years ago. In the First Nation's childcare center, language instructors and elders also spend time with children daily.

Language and attachment to the land are at the root of First Nation people's culture. The land claims agreement means LSCFN now has a land base of its own and resources such as forestry, special management areas and wildlife to co-manage with the territorial and federal governments.

Joe Bellmore, Interim Director of Lands and Resources, says surveys of settlement lands are almost complete and thousands of hectares of land are now within the direct management authority of the First Nation. The framework for management will be a Lands and Resources Act targeted for adoption at the annual general assembly in 2001. The First Nation is currently working with

the Yukon Government and the Renewable Resources Council (RRC) to develop co-management plans for other areas such as the Njordenskjold and Mandana special management areas.

Other co-management measures help bring members of the community closer together. On the RRC, members drawn equally from both the First Nation and the community at large, discuss and make recommendations on resource issues affecting them.

Eric Fairclough, former Little Salmon/Carmacks Chief and current Mayo/Tatchun MLA, says he believes people have more pride now that they have a land claims agreement. "They have something secure and the ability to do things on their own." Fairclough adds that people will develop more self-assurance as they take on new responsibilities and occupy their selected lands. ☉



Former Commissioner of the Yukon Judy Gingell and then Council of Yukon First Nations Grand Chief Shirley Adamson attending the Little Salmon/Carmacks land claims agreement signing ceremony.

Yukon Land Claim Negotiations: Where are we?

The following First Nations have completed their land claim and self-government agreements:

- Champagne/Aishihik First Nations
- Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation
- First Nation of Na-cho Ny'ak Dun
- Selkirk First Nation
- Teslin Tlingit Council
- Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation
- Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation

The following First Nations are in various stages of land claim and self-government negotiations:

- Carcross/Tagish First Nation
- Kluane First Nation
- Kwanlin Dun First Nation
- Liard First Nation
- Ross River Dena Council
- Ta'an Kwach'an Council
- White River First Nation

Eye on the Future: Aborigines and Government in Australia

BY LYN HARTLEY

As the sunrise brightens her office overlooking Main Street in Whitehorse, Elizabeth Hanson is keen to discuss her experience working with an aboriginal organization in Australia. Currently the Director of Claims and Indian Government with Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), Hanson spent the past year working for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

Not new to aboriginal issues, Hanson has played an active role in Yukon land claim and self-government negotiations on behalf of the federal government. But, with an eye on the future, she was interested in opportunities for new organizational structures, once all 14 Yukon land claims were settled. The question on her mind was: "What kind of federal entity should replace Indian Affairs in its relationship with First Nation people?" Curious, she wanted to look beyond Canada and find out what other countries were doing. At the same time, ATSIC wanted to build linkages with Canada, making an interchange possible for Hanson.

ATSIC was created in 1989 by the Australian parliament through legislation and replaced the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and several other related organizations. Aborigines, roughly three percent of the

Australian population, vote for ATSIC's national board of commissioners. "From my own perspective, I was going to look at a different organizational structure. ATSIC interested me because it was a conscious decision made by the federal government to establish an arms-length entity that would represent the interests of aboriginal people throughout Australia," comments Hanson.

Though ATSIC appears to be an interesting concept on paper, Hanson soon discovered that it has faced an uphill battle since inception. Hanson attributes ATSIC's challenges to several factors.

Firstly, there are many political forces to contend with. The ATSIC Board is charged with advocating aboriginal issues. However, the office of the Prime Minister through the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs maintains significant decision and financial powers. Unlike Canada, the Minister is not in cabinet. To make political matters worse, current Australian Prime Minister John Howard has made it clear he does not support the concept of treaties or self-government. Without a government advocate, there is often unbridled criticism of aboriginal issues.

Secondly, the media coverage in Australia is generally unsupportive of aboriginal matters. Partly due to the tone set by the Prime

"My observation is the Australian process is very complex. It certainly doesn't have the potential to change the power-sharing relationships like we have in northern Canada."

ELIZABETH HANSON

Minister, the news headlines were a shock to Hanson. "In Canada, there is a sense of a commitment and an obligation to try and get both sides of the story out. We found the media to be very one-sided and if there was an opportunity to "slag" an aboriginal, it was done," laments Hanson.

Thirdly, in Australia there is no formal recognition of aborigines or of aboriginal rights. "The general public has begun to move in this direction but the political leadership is reluctant and responds to vocal special interest groups," says Hanson.

Hanson believes one of the most striking differences between the Australia and Canada is how each country is developing legislation related to land claims. The Australian government set out legal parameters in legislation about native title and



Claims and Indian Government Director Elizabeth Hanson visiting a sculpture garden in Broken Hill, Australia.

is now trying to understand the implications. This process is reversed in the Yukon. Land claim and self-government agreements are negotiated and then put into effect through legislation.

Hanson reflects, "My observation is the Australian process is very complex. It certainly doesn't have the potential to change the power-sharing relationships like we have in northern Canada. The notion is, if it is in the legislation, it is fair for everybody. Except my sense is it has become so complex that it isn't fair for anybody."

From her ATSIC experience, Hanson has gained insight into future relationships in the Yukon. She believes Yukon First Nations with land claims and self-government agreements require a fundamentally new relationship with the government of Canada. The mechanics of that new government to government relationship are still evolving. In a post-claims world, Hanson says Canada, represented by DIAND, should start with a new organizational structure, rather than continue with DIAND in its present form. "You have to make a conscious decision to create new relationships. This starts with something new. You can't simply transform the old into the new," suggests Hanson.

Upon returning to the Yukon, Hanson has a new appreciation for the Canadian process. "It reinforces for me that it is an important process and worth struggling through. This is an equitable approach to re-establishing the relationship between First Nation peoples and government." ●



Situated in the middle of the continent, Mount Uluru is Australia's most famous land mark. More commonly known as Ayer's Rock, the mammoth granite rock surrounded by flat lands was named Uluru by Australia's Aboriginal people and lies within their traditional territory.

Council of Yukon First Nations

Yukon Communities Accessing High-Tech Training

BY DOUG CALDWELL

One of the greatest challenges of today's increasing dependence on information technology is ensuring all people can access computers and information networks. The gap between those with computers and those without is called the "digital divide".

The world is becoming increasingly dependent on information technology (IT) — currently the largest growing sector in the global economy. Many believe the computer age has become so ingrained in all aspects of our lives and future socio-economic development that computer-skills training is imperative and will become a new level of literacy in the future.

Due to the historic shortcomings of the northern telecommunications network, the relative high-cost of computer equipment and difficult access to Internet services, many Yukon First Nation people have not been exposed to the modern digital world.

The Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) is undertaking a unique partnership project to provide computer access

and training for people with little experience in their use. This project is designed to use Industry Canada's Community Access Program (CAP) and computers provided by the Entrepreneurship Centre.

Many cannot afford the high-cost of purchasing their own computer and rely on other methods to gain access and training. Using reconditioned computers from the Computers for Schools Program managed by the Entrepreneurship Centre, CYFN is creating a computer-training lab in their main administration building in Whitehorse. This is the first phase of the project which will expand to include other Yukon communities.

CYFN's IT Policy Analyst George Morgan explains the value this project will provide: "We have an ongoing need to train our membership in computer use. From entry-level users to people working here at CYFN and out in the band offices around the Yukon, there is a need to provide computer training. Here in Whitehorse, we want to establish a training program so the people

we train here can then go back to their communities and train First Nations people there."

Entry-level training is just the beginning of an ongoing training and awareness process that will extend both computer and technical skills to the Yukon's rural communities.

Morgan explains the importance of this training program: "IT development is critical for the future economic and social opportunities for all rural residents. E-commerce, on-line marketing, distributed learning and many other aspects of IT will become commonplace once the telecommunications networks are upgraded and available to outlying areas. Providing the training now will help prepare many more of our membership to take advantage of Internet opportunities when they get connected."

One key attraction of the CAP program is the commercial opportunity the operation can provide to small communities. For example, a CAP location in Burwash Landing could advertise with a highway sign

in German, French, Italian and English saying: "Check your e-mail here." Email is a service in great demand by the Yukon's international tourists. Not only would this service create traffic for the CAP operator, it would also increase opportunities for other local business and service providers.

There will also be long-term potential for providing training beyond IT into such topics as tourism hospitality, international marketing, literacy skills and much more. But first and foremost, people in the outlying areas will receive the computer training they require. New business opportunities will grow from this training along with more effective and affordable communications with other First Nations.

As CYFN's Morgan says, "This is just the beginning. I can see a day when all Yukon First Nations will be conducting the majority of their business digitally and more opportunities will be created for our people. I feel very excited about the future of First Nation Information Technology." ●



As the oldest permanent settlement in the Yukon, Fort Selkirk is a popular destination for tourists who can explore over 30 historic buildings. The restored heritage site gives visitors the experience of stepping back in time to explore what living in the Yukon was like during the mid-1900s.

Looking Back... Moving Forward

Governments Working Together Brings History Alive

BY GRAHAM MCDONALD

The abandoned cluster of snow covered log buildings at the junction of the Yukon and Pelly Rivers comes to life every summer. As the oldest permanent settlement in the Yukon, Fort Selkirk is a popular destination for tourists who can explore over 30 historic buildings. The settlement has been restored and maintained through a co-management agreement between the Selkirk First Nation and the Yukon Government. Restoration at the site began in the early 1980s and became the subject of a formal co-management agreement in 1989.

A management committee with three Yukon Government and three Selkirk First Nation representatives was set up to oversee the development of management plans and restoration/archeological work at the site.

Doug Olynyk, Historic Sites Coordinator for the Yukon Government says members of the committee work by consensus. "Members share common goals for the site," he adds.

Darin Isaac, the Director of Lands and Resources for the Selkirk First Nation gov-

ernment agrees: "It's one of the better co-management agreements we have with government." He recalls that in 1987, when the Selkirk First Nation began negotiating its land claim agreement, it sought full ownership of the site. By the time the land claims agreement was signed, the First Nation had agreed that a joint and equal ownership and management with the Yukon Government was going to work.

Cooperation on management and restoration of the site has translated into jobs and economic opportunities. About 12 Selkirk First Nation citizens from Pelly Crossing work at the site every summer.

Supervising the work crew since 1994, David Johnny says members of his crew have become skilled builders working with logs cut on the Pelly Farm Road. Last summer they were also trained in historical window construction techniques.

Members of the crew say they like their work. Selkirk First Nation citizen Norman Silas has worked at the site for 20 years. He remembers when willows had to be cut out from inside the buildings. For him, the Fort Selkirk restoration work has meant more than steady seasonal work. He has become a specialist, working from artifacts and pho-

tographs to restore grave sites and make replicas of grave markers and spirit houses.

Other Yukoners also benefit from the site's restoration. Yukon River guides and wilderness outfitters regularly stop at Fort Selkirk, as do hundreds of independent river tourists. Road tourists can boat to the site with Big River Enterprises from Minto Landing or through arrangements with Pelly Farm. Visitor numbers have tripled in the past three years. Last year, more than 1,500 tourists registered at the site. It is such a popular spot with European visitors that German is more likely to be heard than English at times.

Visitors step back in time as they wander through the village, hearing local history first hand from site interpreter Maria Van Bibber. A Selkirk First Nation elder, Van Bibber was born and raised in the village. She explains traditional First Nation culture to her guests, elaborating on how people lived off the land, what plants were used for healing and how gopher snares were made from eagle feathers. She also shares her experiences of growing up in Fort Selkirk.

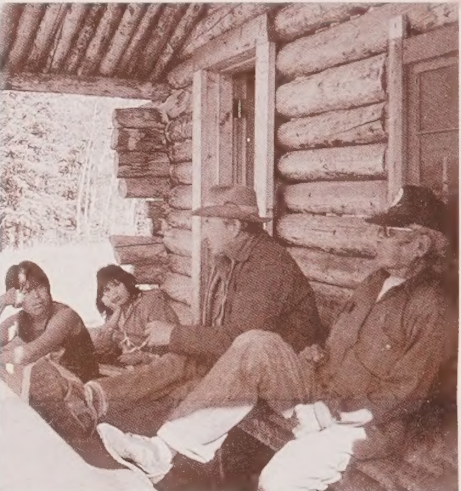
"When the last boat of the season went around the corner, it would toot the whistle and all the dogs in town would howl. There

"When the last boat of the season went around the corner, it would toot the whistle and all the dogs in town would howl. There was a big lump in my throat."

MARIA VAN BIBBER

was a big lump in my throat," she says. Though she relives these memories each fall watching visitors and work crews leaving at the end of another busy summer season, she knows they'll return the following year.

By working together, the Selkirk First Nation and Yukon Government have captured a part of our shared past and developed a tourist attraction which will contribute to the economy for years to come.



Selkirk First Nation students Eugene Alfred and Bernice Johnny listening to stories shared by the late Elder Tommy McGinty and Elder Harry Baum at Fort Selkirk in 1989.

Fort Selkirk: A Gathering Place

BY GRAHAM MCDONALD

There is a very long history of seasonal human use of the Fort Selkirk area. Stone tools found nearby have been dated at 8,000 and 10,000 years old. Stories passed down by the elders tell of a volcanic eruption that geologists estimate took place 7,000 years ago.

Artifacts also confirm the site has been used as a seasonal gathering place for hundreds of years. Tlingit speaking Chilkats, who controlled the coastal passes to the Pacific, came there to trade with the local Northern Tutchone, Han from the Klondike River area and Mountain Dene from the Mackenzie River basin.

The Chilkats traded European goods in the area from 1790 onwards. In 1848 Robert

Campbell established the Hudson's Bay Company post called Fort Selkirk. In 1852, the Fort was destroyed by fire and Campbell left the area.

By the time Arthur Harper built his store in 1892, things were changing in the North. More Europeans were coming into the Yukon River Basin and when gold was found in the Klondike, the trickle became a rush. By 1898, Fort Selkirk had grown from a seasonal gathering place into a settlement with churches, a North-West Mounted Police post, a schoolhouse and 11 log buildings to house the Yukon Field Force. By 1899, it was connected to the government telegraph line. Fort Selkirk was considered as a possible capital for the newly formed territory.

After the rush, it remained a trading center and a seasonal home to many Northern Tutchone families. It was a regular stop for steamships shipping goods to Dawson City. Current Yukon Senator, Ione Christensen, was raised in the village where her father, G.I. Cameron, staffed the RCMP outpost from 1935 to 1949.

Despite only being accessible by water or air, Fort Selkirk remained an active community until the 1950s. The building of a road from Whitehorse to Mayo and then Dawson bypassed the settlement and brought on the demise of the steamship shipping network. The Northern Tutchone people moved to Minto Landing and Pelly Crossing.



The old school house at Fort Selkirk may be empty but the site is still teaching visitors the Yukon's rich history.

visions north

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